



RECONCILING CULTURES AND GENERATIONS



REFLECTIONS ON
TODAY'S CHURCH BY
KOREAN AMERICAN
CATHOLICS



EDITED BY
SIMON C. KIM
AND
FRANCIS DAESHIN KIM

FOREWORD BY
JAMES K. LEE

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*Reflections on Today's Church by
Korean American Catholics*

Edited by
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and
Francis Daeshin Kim

Foreword by
James K. Lee

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*Dedicated to Our Parents
who journeyed to this country to give us a better life*

Korean American Catholic Theological Society (KACTS)

In 2013, the Korean American Priest Association (KAPA) began preparations for the 2016 Korean American Catholic Jubilee (1966–2016). To commemorate this milestone, Fr. Simon C. Kim envisioned a group to theologically reflect on what it means to be Korean American Catholics. This ongoing reflection continues with this project addressing cultural and generational issues.

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Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

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Foreword

The prologue of the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares

that [t]hose who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world... All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer (CCC, 3).

The task of handing on the Good News of Jesus Christ from generation to generation is challenging in every time and place, yet it becomes increasingly difficult when there are social and cultural obstacles between generations. These obstacles are magnified among groups of immigrants who, on the one hand, are overlooked or marginalized by mainstream society, and, on the other hand, isolate themselves from their environment and thus create exclusive communities.

The consequences for succeeding generations are stark, for many struggle to reconcile the distinctive culture of their parents' generation with the socio-cultural norms of the prevailing society. Moreover, many feel excluded from the communities of preceding generations, especially in the context of religious worship. While ethnic Churches provide support and stability for immigrants, the children of those immigrants find themselves outsiders in relation to the Church and to society. In effect, this creates a "minority within a minority,"¹ and the differences between

¹ See the discussion by Simon C. Kim, *An Immigration of Theology: Theology of Context as the Theological Method of Virgilio Elizondo and Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 231-32.

generations can obstruct the handing on of the faith. How might we overcome such differences in order to share the Good News everywhere in the world? The authors of this volume take up the challenge of reconciling cultures and generations specifically in the context of Korean American Catholicism in the United States. While Catholicism has experienced explosive growth in Korea, the Korean American Catholic communities have struggled to maintain their existence,² even as the Korean American population as a whole has increased, demonstrating the difficulty of handing on the faith to future generations. How might Korean American Catholics overcome the obstacles between generations in order to share the gospel message? How might second and third generation Korean Americans integrate their Korean heritage with their American upbringing? What is distinctive about Korean American Catholicism, and what contributions might Korean American Catholics make to the church and to the world?

This book opens up a dialogue between scholars from various disciplines to consider the challenges that Korean American Catholics face today, and to suggest ways of overcoming cultural and generational differences in order to arrive at ecclesial unity. This dialogue began several years ago, under the leadership of Fr. Simon C. Kim, who founded the Korean American Catholic Theological Society in order to create the space to think theologically and academically about what it means to be Korean, American, and Catholic. The chapters of this volume are the proceedings from a colloquium held in December 2016 at the Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX, where I currently teach and conduct research in the

² Simon C. Kim, *Memory and Honor: Cultural and Generational Ministry with Korean American Communities* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 20-21.

field of church history. Many thanks to Dean Craig Hill, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Evelyn Parker, and to the entire faculty of the Perkins School of Theology for their hospitality, and for their constructive feedback, from which we benefitted greatly. We hope that this conversation will continue as we strive to find ways to bridge generations, and academic disciplines, in order to take up the task of handing on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As Church historian Robert Louis Wilken observes, “the Christian gospel does not appear in a vacuum”;³ rather, it is revealed in particular historical contexts, of a piece with the revelation of God to Israel. Our aim is to bring to light the special contributions of Korean American Catholics in our contemporary context as we seek to overcome the cultural and generational obstacles to the transmission of the faith. In doing so, we hope to provide a way forward for immigrant religious communities from various backgrounds in the church to foster reconciliation between generations, and to respond to the call to hand on the faith from generation to generation “by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer” (CCC, 3).

James K. Lee
KACTS President

³ Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 17.

Preface

Korean. American. Catholic. The heart of this project is to fully embrace each of these sources of identity and allow them to coalesce into an authentic life of faith whose totality, while remaining true to each source, is more than merely the sum total of these sources. As in many contexts of migration, the intermingling of these cultures has led to the emergence of something new that is distinct from both the culture of its origins and the culture of its new home while remaining beholden to each. This is one of the perennial questions of cultural identity, to navigate the intersection of: “*who do ‘we’ say that we are?*” and “*who do ‘they’ say that we are?*” Or, re-phrased in the more individualistic American schema: “*who do ‘I’ say that I am?*” and “*who do ‘you’ say that I am?*” These questions point to the articulation and performance of individual and group identity as many competing claims are negotiated.

These questions also highlight a problem intertwined with passing on the faith to the next generation: negotiating individual and group identity in a context of racialization. That is, how do individuals and groups remain authentically *Korean, American, and Catholic* in the United States when the rules for negotiating identity have already been set within the racialized schema of *White, Black, and Protestant*? Moreover, how does this group ensure survival and flourishing in the United States for the current generation and those to come when the price to pay for such flourishing is an ever closer integration into the values of goodness, beauty, truth, and social appropriateness carried by the historical dominance of White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and away from those carried by Korean culture and Roman Catholicism? Finally, how does this group justify the hidden cost of

acceptance which is to exacerbate and exaggerate the differences between Korean American Catholics and African Americans all the while reassuring whites, whatever the cost, that Korean Americans are “not-black”?

There are no easy answers to these questions but the social facts show that the Faustian bargain for acceptance as “Americans”—entrance into a kind of “whiteness” or “honorary whiteness” that excludes proximity to or resemblance of “blackness”—has already been accepted by many. As sociologists Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David G. Embrick pointed out more than a decade ago:

...the United States is developing a loose tri-racial stratification system with whites at the top, an intermediary group of honorary whites (similar to the middle racial strata in Latin America and the Caribbean), and a nonwhite group, or the collective black, at the bottom ... the white group will include “traditional” whites; new “white” immigrants; and in the near future, assimilated Latinos, some multi-racials (light-skinned ones), and individual members of other groups (some Asian Americans, etc.). We predict the intermediate racial group will comprise most light-skinned Latinos (e.g., most Cubans and segments of the Mexican and Puerto Rican communities) ... Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Asian Indians, Chinese Americans, the bulk of multiracials...and most Middle Eastern Americans. Finally, the collective black will include blacks, dark-skinned Latinos,

Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, and maybe Filipinos.¹

For the most part, Korean Americans are accepted because of their hard work, educational prowess, and intense devotional faith life—all of which conform to previous immigrant models especially within the European Catholic legacy of this country. Therefore, reflections from this ethnic group, including their faith experience, must be taken with a word of caution as they cannot ignore the violence done to one's culture in the process of conformity. Much has been lost (for example, language, cultural practices, etc.) in this process of conforming to the expectations of not only their parents' demands, but also those of society. What is lost is slowly and painfully beginning to surface in the hopes of being recovered and reconciled through projects like this one even when faced with limited resources and knowledge.

In the process of reconstruction of one's identity and heritage, it is painfully evident that the wounds of differing generations are not isolated cases but can transcend many immigrant groups and their offspring. In fact, these wounds are transmitted in the silent suffering of individuals and crucially are given voice through reflections found in this book. The voices that shatter the silence point to a hopeful reality that we are not alone and that everyone in the United States shares in this broken heritage.

A familiar way this broken heritage manifests itself is in the racial discord that is still plaguing our country. Some have even gone as far as to name this injustice America's original sin. Like the fall of Adam

¹ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David G. Embrick, "Black, Honorary White, White: The Future of Race in the United States," in *Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the 'Color-Blind' Era*, ed. David Brunsma (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 33–4.

and Eve, relationships are continuing to be broken with God, one another, and creation at an alarming rate. Recent events that shocked us are not new tensions in our American culture, but have been brewing systematically since not enough structural changes have been accomplished to alleviate the racial discord of this country. Rather than eroding racial lines that have divided us historically (white/black), new lines of demarcation have emerged giving an appearance of tolerance and wider acceptance of differences. However, what has emerged—a tri-racial hierarchy—has further exacerbated race relations rather than addressing them. Within this tri-racial hierarchy, new categories such as white, honorary white, and collective black further emphasize the privileges of white dominance through the appearance of inclusion of those socially acceptable (honorary) while others face greater marginalization.

Therefore, bridging cultures and generations is not about becoming more “American” or more “Catholic.” How could the coming together of God’s people from different cultures produce violence especially since this country was built on immigration and we still inhabit an immigrant worship space? The simple answer to this is the imbalance between the encounters of different groups and the “threat” perceived in the differences. This is why a heightened sensitivity is necessary when we speak of bridging cultures and generations. What must be avoided at all costs is the desire to enter into the space of white dominance to enjoy some of the privileges that Korean Americans may possess at the expense of other immigrants or generations. The call for reconciliation of cultures and generations is an attempt to raise this awareness by voicing the woundedness of the lived or inherited immigrant and their faith experience as well as pointing to another way—the way of the cross revealing

the death and resurrection of Christ—in order for our gatherings to reflect the reign of God in our midst.

As the Catholic faith in this country continues to mature in light of ongoing immigration, past cultural mutilations are beginning to emerge as current encounters are more closely examined. These wounds continue to pass generationally until they are addressed through awareness and reconciliation. It is our hope that the reflections found in the pages of this book raise awareness of not just a single ethnic faith group, but a part of the lived reality of every family that came to this country calling it their new home.

Again, what must be avoided in both church and society is the absorption into an Anglo reality or a multicultural one where different groups simply coexist. Rather, cultural and generational encounters require equal footing in dialogue and negotiation where every group has something to contribute. It is thus imperative that works such as these are not color-blind to the outcomes when cultural or generational bridges are formed in US society. The Catholic faith requires so much more as it brings people from all over the world together while breaking down the sins of inequality. The wounds of brokenness found in every reflection of a cultural faith journey are not just about clashes but, importantly, the hope of the resurrection.

Thus, even though reflections from the Korean American Catholic faith experience fill the pages of this book, these reflections also echo the migration patterns of previous religious groups to this country as well as transcending those who are currently navigating their own cultural and faith heritage from various parts of the world. This is why reflections from a particular ethnic faith group are not limited to them, but are also invaluable expressions of the universal aspects of our church. In other words, Korean American reflections on

the Catholic faith pertain to all groups including the dominant white English-speaking communities in this country. The desired outcome is that reflections on today's church by Korean American Catholics will encourage other Christians to do so as well to truly enrich the universal faith we profess.

Kevin P. Considine & Simon C. Kim

Introduction

What is your name?

Yes, you, dear reader, what is your name? Perhaps your name is John Kim or Jennifer Park? It's nice to meet you. So, I'm assuming from your last name that you are Korean, or of Korean heritage. But I also notice that your first name is rather Americanized. I wonder how you got to have that particular first name. Were you born with it? So, it was chosen for you? Or perhaps you chose it yourself? In any case, I am guessing that it was at least partly chosen for ease of assimilation into this, your adopted country of America. If that is the case, it's interesting what that says not only about you (or whoever chose the name) but also about this country.

But do you also have a Korean name? Perhaps you have one that's even on your birth certificate, but it's never used, and maybe seems very foreign to you, disembodied, like it's not really yours. In my mind that makes you truly second generation. I would guess that you speak a little Korean, in emergencies or to your grandparents (or in many cases, parents) but you wouldn't consider yourself fluent. I wonder how much your Americanized name truly helped you to assimilate, or maybe even to lose touch a little with your roots, your Korean heritage.

If you told me that the name on your birth certificate was Jiwon, or Jisoo, and that not too long ago this is what people called you, until you were uprooted, then of course I might identify you as more towards first generation, maybe 1.5. In some cases you may have decided to stick with your given name and not adopt a new, Americanized name for reasons of pride, in your identity, your family, your homeland, but those are special cases. Actually, in many of those cases, I may still

be tempted to guess that you have a greater connection to Korean language and culture than many others of your generation, but this would be a generalization.

In any case, you say your name is Jiwon Lee, or Jisoo Choi? Again, I'm pleased to meet you. I wonder how *you* got your first name. Does one of the characters of your two-syllabled first name qualify as a *dollim*, an indicator of generation in your particular clan? In other words, most of your siblings and cousins also have names that contain a "Ji" or whichever character is the *dollim* of that generation. And most of the members of the previous generation also share one character. And you may be encouraged and expected (though not required) to consult the tables and include the next generation's character in your children's names. The fact that you are even considering following this system indicates in my mind a kind of conservatism, an acquiescence to tradition that makes you closer to first generation in outlook than second.

You may have been given your first name by other methods. Following more shamanistic practices, maybe fortunes were consulted? Possibly your grandparents employed a kind of numerology, or visited a fortune teller to be advised on "lucky" Chinese characters with which to endow your name? Or on the other end of the scale, perhaps your first name is purely phonetic and doesn't even have any Chinese character roots; in other words, it is very modern Korean with no link to tradition. Maybe your name is a color, or onomatopoeic. In either case, I'd assume you were more "Korean" than "American," in the former case more old-school Korean and in the latter more *post-* or even *anti-*traditionalist, but Korean nevertheless.

Ah, but you say your name is Thomas Chung or Irene Kang? Nice to meet you too. And you tell me that this is the name not only on your birth certificate but also

on your baptismal certificate? Now I'm beginning to get a little jealous. I'm guessing you're a cradle Catholic who comes from an enviable background of devotion and piety. A dyed-in-the-wool Korean American Catholic. Well, I know many of you, but you are various. I don't assume anything about your allegiance to your erstwhile homeland of Korea, I don't even assume about your faith, but I guess that there's a devout and influential family member somewhere (your grandmother?) who not only prays for you constantly but had something to do with the fact that you have the name of a saint, and one that fortunately translates very well into your adopted country.

I'd be a little less jealous if you had introduced yourself as Ignacio or Scholastica. Actually, I take that back. You wear your Catholic heart on your sleeve! Wear it with pride! Especially if you're male and your name is the Italianate "Andrea" or "Nicola"! But in all seriousness, I'm guessing in your case that maybe you don't really go by the name Ignacio or Scholastica (or Andrea or Nicola). Maybe it's the name you're known by at church, but it's not the name on your driver's license or on your email. Maybe you have a multitude of names, a Korean name, plus a nice American name like Sam, but also this baptismal name which indicates your faith, but only in small circles. That also would say something about you, wouldn't you say?

It's fascinating how something as simple as the name you choose to present yourself with can suggest to the careful observer something about your generation, your faith, your culture, your outlook, fluency in Korean, adherence to tradition, and other traits. Although the degrees are extremely varied, your name *can* be an indicator. It can support hypotheses that although you immigrated twenty years ago, you still live and work within Korean communities and still do not feel

completely assimilated into American society. It can indicate that you like to keep your work life, social life, and church life separate. It can suggest where you are, or more likely where you'd like to be, in your faith. And if you told me your last name wasn't Korean at all, that would be a whole different kettle of fish! Personally speaking, my ideal would be someone whose name is the same on their birth certificate, baptismal certificate, *and* driver's license, which encapsulates their *Korean-ness*, *American-ness*, and *Catholicity*, but what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.

My name is Francis Daeshin Kim.

Actually, literally nobody I know knows me as Francis Daeshin Kim.

Francis is my baptismal name and the name I'm known by at church. Since I joined the Catholic Church in 2009 and chose my baptismal name myself (after Francis de Sales, whose history of disappointing his father, studying in Paris, and spending a life in scholarship and writing really spoke to me!) nobody who knew me before 2009 knows me as Francis. However, at church, they *only* know me as Francis. The name on my birth certificate, driver's license, and somehow more pertinently, my Facebook page, are all simply Daeshin Kim.

So people who met me at church or Catholic events and retreats and who remember me as Francis Kim have had trouble connecting with me on social media. And people who met me socially or professionally also have trouble finding me because they cannot remember this name which is deceptively difficult to visualize or pronounce. I never before had

any other “Americanized” name, and have stubbornly resisted acquiring one, even while I suffered the disadvantages of insisting on introducing myself with a name that few Americans could be bothered to remember. I do believe that this has adversely affected my chances at success, but acknowledge that this is not the only reason. I have recently read a few wonderful articles describing issues similar to mine.¹ But why have I stuck with my given name?

The answer, I suppose, is pride in my family and its accomplishments, and in particular a naming system devised by my grandfather...

My father’s father was born in northern Korea, in 1902. He grew up when Korea was under Japanese rule, and by the time he was a teenager, he had made up his mind to cross the border into China and seek out fellow would-be revolutionaries. He learned that there were underground meetings in Shanghai where things were happening, so that’s where he headed and settled, finding work as a ticket collector on the city’s tram system among other odd jobs. Eventually, he managed to infiltrate this clandestine crowd of expats and together with their fellow countrymen they dreamed and made plans to win their country back.

At around the same time, my grandmother, a precocious young girl who, despite only having an elementary school education, was commended by her teachers (who were of course Japanese at this time) and spoke both Japanese and Chinese fluently (together with

¹ I particularly enjoyed Gene Park’s heartfelt article in the *Washington Post* at

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/09/22/the-soft-bigotry-of-having-to-change-your-name-because-somehow-tchaikovsky-is-easier/>

and Tasbeeh Herwees’s poetic statement in *The Toast* at <http://the-toast.net/2014/01/15/the-names-they-gave-me/>.

a little English), found herself sent to Shanghai to be employed by a Korean lady of society, who had recently given birth to the child of famed freedom fighter Cho So Ang. Cho was married and had a family back in Korea, but his new life as a revolutionary in China had come with a new lover and a new family, and my grandmother's services as a nanny were much needed.

And so it was at one of these meetings (allegedly at the house of legendary leader of the revolution Kim Gu) that my grandparents met. They eventually married and continued their fight to help liberate their homeland from a distance, variously pursued, imprisoned, living in hiding, and traveling, all over our largest neighboring country. And it was while they were on the road that they even managed to start a family. Aware of how ill-advised it would be to keep any evidence or leave a paper trail of their movements or their whereabouts, my grandfather came up with the idea of naming each child after where they were born. This way, they could keep track of where they were and when, just by knowing the names and birthdays of their children. And so it was that my aunts and uncles were named Shanghai, and Beijing, among other Chinese cities. One of my aunts, born in the small and remote industrial city of Tongryŏ, and unfortunately named thus, hated her name so much that in her later life she introduced herself as Deborah, after her favorite Western actress, Deborah Kerr.

You can trace the path my grandparents and their ever-growing family took through China by using these markers. An article about my family published in the Korean daily paper *Chosun Ilbo* on Independence Day (March 1st) at the turn of the century showed a map illustrating this journey. And so, we know that in 1945, they were in the capital city of Manchuria, because that was where my father was born, Jangchoon Kim. And there's a happy ending to all this too: their only child

with a Korean city name was their last, the one born after Korea was liberated in 1950 and they were able to return home. He was named Hansung, the ancient name for the capital city of Seoul.

My father continued this new “tradition” with his children. I was born in the district of Daeshin in Seoul, that little hilly area just behind Yonsei University. My younger brother’s name is London, born after we emigrated to England, where my uncle (the one born in Beijing) had settled after marrying an English lady he had met while living in the Christian community of L’Abri in Switzerland.²

My own parallel story is that I grew up in England, arriving there in the early 1970s when there were perhaps a few dozen Koreans, and my uncle founded a Korean church and was always the spiritual leader of the growing community (eventually he presided over the three large churches around the city of London). And so, I was brought up *Korean, British, and Protestant*, if you will. And in spite of the fact that both of my father’s brothers are Presbyterian pastors, I ended up meeting and marrying a Korean American Catholic here in Los Angeles, converting to Catholicism, and becoming a happy part of her large family that plays an active part at churches from the San Fernando Valley to Orange County. And so, I now consider myself an honorary Korean American Catholic.

It crossed my mind recently that in the same way that my grandfather sought out his fellow countrymen in the foreign land of China and played his part in that

² If my brother’s and uncle’s names suddenly sound familiar to you, this may be because my actor cousin in Korea gets a lot of mileage out of our family’s story while doing the rounds on their media (albeit with various exaggerations and inaccuracies), but it’s always interesting to hear how the powerful presence of our grandfather’s legacy has affected these parallel branches of his sprawling family. See <https://youtu.be/yjM6bV0fjxo>.

community, and my father (and especially uncle) played a leadership role among his fellow expats in the foreign land of England, I too am called to play my part among my fellow Koreans here in America. And it is thus that I find myself contributing my modest abilities to this project, and introducing to you me and some of my fellow writers who are doing so much to light the way for an increasingly embattled generation, descended from the pioneering and the faithful, and unsure of how to reconcile the gaps appearing in our culture and generations.

How fitting it is then that our first paper is written by Kevin Considine, an honorary Korean American Catholic if ever there was one. You'll read about his reality which is so rich and complex, and (if you'll forgive the tautology) so *real*, and you'll understand what it really is to live along a spectrum of race that is measured in increments of white Euro-Christian-ness. You'll read about how his multicultural nuclear family has tried to continue an ancient Korean tradition of honoring the spirit of the dead, and if you are anywhere near as Korean as he, you'll marvel at the effort and wonder why you don't do more to keep our heritage alive. Finally, you will learn a way of living that may just put you on the path to salvation while connecting deeply with the world we live in.

The author of our second paper, Elizabeth Anne Park, suggests another way to bring us together and to heal the cracks. Storytelling, she cogently argues, encapsulates us, who we were, and who we will become. And so, it is through the stories that I myself was compelled to tell in this introduction, and the personal stories that quite deliberately are contained in each contributor's paper, that we may begin to reach out and create these bonds. The stories told by our next contributor, my fellow convert, James Lee, speak to me

precisely because they are mine too, but when it comes to scholarship, he is on a completely different level, and I can only stand back in awe at the way he has delved so deeply into the history of our new faith, becoming an expert on such theologians as Cyprian and Augustine, and able to apply their teachings to our reality. We learn about what it means to be truly “inclusive” and, similar to Kevin Considine’s paper, we are taught a lesson about how to live (using what “charity” means in the Augustinian sense) that will help us navigate our tricky situations in these crucial moments.

If James Lee looks to the essence of these theologians’ teachings, Elizabeth Oh looks similarly deeply into Catholicism but also, somewhat surprisingly, uses Confucianism to guide her. Her story is a poignant woman’s story that many will identify with, and the other half had better listen closely to. In an analysis that is courageous and feels almost revolutionary in going back to the original intent of Confucianism, she opens our eyes to how we can better understand our identity and the positive roles we can play in the church.

In this book about reconciling cultures and generations, Mi-Kyoung Hwang adds a much-needed voice in discussing the challenges of language. She argues elegantly for reconciliation as a solution to such barriers, linguistic and otherwise, and it is heartening to learn that such an important sacrament can amount to what a layman might term conflict resolution. And the solution is spirituality! Another type of solution is proposed by historian Franklin Rausch, whose paper details events in our country’s history that some of our readers may be embarrassed to find they were ignorant of. His suggestion that we look to those who kept their faith, even under foreign rule, provides a context certainly for my family as described above, but also for many of us Korean American Catholics struggling to do

something similar today. Our final contributor, Irene Kang, proposes a startlingly original but simple solution to these challenges. And how wonderful it is to discover this new voice with fresh ideas. Irene is very recently married, a highly sought-after youth minister, and a scholar in her own right. When she talks about the “ratios” of each component of being Korean, American, and Catholic, she shows an innate understanding of the variety and complexity of our identity. She is our future.

An appropriate send-off is provided by Fr. Simon Kim’s epilogue. Reading this perspicacious and far-sighted paper, I had flashbacks of my own upbringing in the Korean community in London in the 1970s, and the faith community formed by my family there. When he writes of the need for creative and innovative programming for young adults in our Korean American Catholic community, it reminds me of how much work is yet to be done, and how people like me are called to serve in this critical area. When he insists on solutions to reconciling cultures and generations, I look back on how I have lived my life, and how I intend to live in the future.

The name that was chosen for me expressed a pride in my family’s legacy. When I had my first child, I named her Sherman, after Sherman Oaks. Our second child was also born in Sherman Oaks, so he was given the name Chandler, after the beautiful tree-lined boulevard that bordered the north side of our apartment complex. They have Korean names, but they are hardly used. They have baptismal names, but I am ashamed to say that they are used even less.

Especially in my case, my name indicates who I am. Maybe I am too proud of my family’s self-made tradition. Maybe I am over-individualistic and prone to living in a vacuum. But the chapters in this book help us to understand the richness we must bear, and how to

move forward from there. How you choose to be known expresses how you choose to be in the world. I already expressed that my ideal would be a name that is Korean, American, and Catholic. If you don't have one of those for yourself, maybe you can give them to your offspring, and do it better than I did. Meanwhile, the name with which I choose to present myself to you continues to signal the way that I hope to reconcile cultures and generations.

My name is Francis Daeshin Kim.

Solidarity with the Sinned-Against

*A Reflection on Cultural Hybridity, Racialization,
and Transmission of the Christian Faith*

Kevin P. Considine

My sons are inheriting a complex Christian tradition from their parents. My wife, our two sons, and I all are baptized Catholic. Today, I remain a practicing Catholic even though we as a family have committed to a multiracial, non-denominational Christian church on Chicago's south side. My own background is that of a German-Irish, white Catholic man from Massillon, Ohio. My father and mother were raised in Catholic families in Akron, Ohio, and my brother and I are formed indelibly as Catholic, regardless of whether we would have become practicing or not.¹ My wife is a Korean American evangelical Christian woman who was born in Seoul and raised in Los Angeles, California.² My mother-in-law was raised in a Catholic family in what is now North Korea, and my father-in-law, also Korean, was born in Japan, later orphaned, and then grew up in Masan, a port city on the southern coast near Busan, without any need for Christian or religious affiliation. My wife and

¹ As Chaeyoon Lim points out, "Unlike Mainline Protestants, who tend to stop identifying with the tradition or denomination when their religiosity wanes, Catholics in America tend to hang on to their faith identity, even when they no longer participate in religious life." See "Korean American Catholics in the Changing American Landscape: A Statistical Portrait," in *Embracing Our Inheritance: Jubilee Reflections on Korean American Catholics (1966-2016)*, ed. Simon C. Kim and Francis Daeshin Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 45-46.

² I am indebted to Kiae Sung Considine, my spouse, partner, friend, and intellectual better, for collaborating on this essay through discussion and revisions.

her brother both were baptized Catholic in South Korea before her family immigrated to the United States in the 1980s. After immigrating, they joined a Korean Presbyterian church and then remained within Korean Protestant evangelical Christianity.

My sons also are inheriting a complex racialized existence from their parents and US society. The term “racialized” refers to the ongoing process in which groups who share very general phenotypic similarities continue to be grouped together as peoples, or “races,” who have innate characteristics and who are measured according to the standards of beauty, goodness, truth, and social appropriateness set by Europeans and their descendants on various continents. In other words, “race” is not the work of the Creator. It was the work of Western Europeans as they voyaged to find trade routes and enrich their home kingdoms. As they did, they had to find a way to understand the relation of their “Euro-Christian” civilization to the rest of the world. What emerged gradually was the theory of the “races.”³ In short, the historical construction of “race” was a new creation that reinforced Euro-white Christians in positions of wealth and power.⁴

³ The “white race” was considered the superior one and was Christian and Western European. Others, such as “mongoloid” and “negroid,” occupied various places of subordination within a hierarchy that had whites on top. Each “race” had innate characteristics that were inferior to those of the “white” race, but also in relation to each other. The non-white “races” had to be conquered and assimilated into Euro-white Christian civilization for their own good and salvation. This is the root of “race” as a way of understanding the human person. It reinforced the power structures that had been created by colonization and provided the conquerors a justification for their actions. Its power structure has changed, but remains within the fabric of society.

⁴ J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

My family lives in a predominantly African-American neighborhood, and they know that they are not black. Their cousins on each side of the family are inter-ethnic and intra-racial: three cousins who are a Euro-American mixture racialized “white” and three cousins who are a Korean Chinese mixture racialized “Asian.” Within our extended families, the “white” branch is Roman Catholic and the “Asian” branch is Protestant-evangelical or non-affiliated/non-Christian. Although my sons will most likely benefit from a kind of reconfigured white privilege, they are neither traditionally white nor fully Asian American. They, like many others, are caught betwixt and between clear-cut racialized categories and at the intersection of cultures.

Therefore, this essay is a reflection upon passing on the faith to the next generation in a context of cultural hybridity, racialized ambiguity, and a growing sense of the irrelevance of Christian faith in daily life.⁵ The context in which my family and I live is characterized by Korean American evangelical (my wife’s heritage) and Euro-American Roman Catholic (my heritage) sensibilities, among many other threads, and we have woven these various threads together into a strange tapestry. Since this is a theological reflection, rather than offering clear-cut answers, I instead briefly introduce each problem through personal experience and offer an avenue for theological exploration to engage with that problem.

Cultural Hybridity

Our family performed our first prayers for the dead (*Jesa*) for our dearly departed grandmother (*halmeoni*) during a recent Korean Thanksgiving holiday (*Chuseok*). Although a *Jesa* remains a point of contention

⁵ In the US context, the rise of the “nones” illustrates this sense. See Lim, “A Statistical Portrait,” in *Embracing Our Inheritance*, 45-46.

in much of Korean and Korean American Protestant Christianity, Catholicism has tended to be more welcoming.⁶ Because we are an intercultural family, and a nuclear family with no relatives even in the same time zone, the ceremony we performed was revised, nontraditional, and culled from my wife's memories of her childhood and the research I was able to do. We brought out a traditional table and stocked it with *halmeoni's* favorite foods, which included everything from KFC chicken to burritos *al pastor* to Korean pears and rice cakes. On the table, we displayed pictures of her from throughout her life. We replaced the traditional incense and candles that we could not find with two devotional candles to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Since my wife's family emigrated from South Korea to Los Angeles and ran a business in a predominantly Mexican American neighborhood, this pastiche of cultural artifacts seemed appropriate. My wife used her memory

⁶ The Catholic understanding accepts ancestor veneration in the context of the "communion of saints" but does not teach that the spirits of the dead actually appear at the ceremony. Although the Korean *Jesa* is not identical with other rituals of ancestor veneration in many East Asian cultures, the official Catholic permission for participation in *Jesa* is connected to the "Rites controversy" over ancestor veneration centered in China in the seventeenth century. The origin of the Rites controversy was the debate among Catholic missionaries—Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans—to China about whether Confucianism and the veneration of ancestors was compatible with the Catholic faith. After centuries of debate and changes back and forth in official teaching, in 1939 the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith issued a decree, *Plane compertum est*, that Catholics could participate in the ritual veneration of ancestors, albeit with limits. Pope Paul VI approved this decree. The documents from the Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes* and *Sacrosanctum concilium* reinforced and expanded this permission and the question of veneration of ancestors was taken up by many local Conferences of Bishops in different parts of Asia. See Jonathan Tan, "Chinese Rites Controversy," in *Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, ed. Daniel Patte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 210.

to bring us through the various movements in the ceremony from inviting *halmeoni* in to eat and be with us, to pouring drinks, to wishing her goodbye. Our two young boys were involved and enjoyed spending time with *halmeoni*. It remains a happy memory for all of us.

At the same time, the way that we adopted the tradition of *Jesa* for our context invites critique. First, we acknowledged but ultimately disregarded the patriarchal structure of the ritual. It is the eldest brother and other male family members who traditionally are responsible for *Jesa*. Since we have no family nearby, and since *halmeoni* had never received a *Jesa*, we deemed it more important to do the best we could with what we had. Second, my lineage is not Korean but European which raises the question of an “orientalist” cultural appropriation of this ritual. There is a long history of Europeans and Euro-Americans appropriating religious rituals from other cultures, and especially cultures rooted in East, South, and Southeast Asia. For evidence, one need look no farther than the proliferation of methods of meditation drawn from Hinduism, Daoism, and Buddhism or how images of the Buddha have become a “chic” aesthetic among various Euro-American groups. Again, necessity outweighed the critique in our judgment. Our sons needed to begin to embrace an important part of their Korean heritage, and Catholicism, as I had come to understand and live it, provided a warrant and context. Furthermore, the consumeristic hyper-culture of the United States has little room for elders, let alone remembering and honoring beloved elders who have died. So, it has taken on a greater importance that our sons experience a means for venerating lost loved ones and honoring an important part of their heritage within their home of cultural hybridity.

This example—a re-contextualized *Jesa* being carried out by the daughter of Korean immigrants, her German-Irish white Catholic husband, and their children, in a condominium in a predominantly African American neighborhood—highlights the challenge of cultural hybridity. Many Korean American Catholics are choosing lives that stretch the boundaries of a traditional Catholic identity yet wish to remain true to the foundations of being both Korean American *and* Roman Catholic. My family is an example of this. We are creating a new space,⁷ perhaps one in which the textures of several cultures are coming together and something new is arising. As hybridity, it calls many things into question and is located at boundaries of Korean American, Catholic, Euro-American, non-denominational Christian, and other markers of identity. This emerging space of cultural hybridity is itself an in-between or interstitial space and as such poses a challenge to passing on the Christian faith to the next generation.

Racialization and Whiteness

In his first-grade class, my elder son truly is part of a multiracial, multicultural world. His elementary school is roughly sixty percent black, eighteen percent white, nine percent Hispanic, eight percent Asian, and six percent “other” (and my younger son’s preschool was similar). This is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, his “normal” is to interact constantly with children who look different than he does through making friends and having elementary school quarrels. He already is

⁷ I am thinking of the term “third space,” which comes from Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). However, oftentimes “third space” refers to one that already exists as opposed to one that is coming into being but still not defined. Hence, I have opted for the term “new space.”

posing questions about race and culture that I never could at his age due to attending an elementary school that was racially and religiously monolithic. On the other hand, the social realities of racialization and whiteness have constructed a paradigm in which he does not quite fit. His classmates know that he is not “black,” and most know that he is not traditionally “white.” His complexion is relatively light, but he has dark hair and eyes, so his features do not fit well into any preconceived racialized paradigm. He always has received compliments for being “handsome” although when he was younger, adults of all racialized backgrounds often mistook him for a girl. In Chicago and the Midwest, especially on the south side of Chicago, a “*Hapa*”⁸ was an unknown quantity. My sons do not fit neatly into the cartography of race that US society has adopted. Due to his lighter complexion, he is more easily associated with the norms of whiteness but not enough to “pass” without question.

Race itself is a social construct and not a biological fact. As a social construct, however, it is imbued with the power to either enhance or diminish one’s life possibilities and sense of human dignity due to nothing more than phenotype. The process of racialization, initiated during colonization and articulated in the Enlightenment, continues to unfold part and parcel with twenty-first-century globalization

⁸ This is a Hawaiian term, meaning “half,” that had been adopted into California vernacular to refer to someone who is half Asian Pacific Islander. As Henry Rietz writes, “I do not have the privilege of speaking from a generally recognized social location. My mixed, or what we call in Hawai’i, *hapa*, heritage precludes me from claiming any one identity with integrity. I am both Asian-American and Euro-American, and yet I am neither. I am an ‘other’ to the Other.” See, Henry Rietz, “My Father Has No Children: Reflections on a *Hapa* Identity Toward a Hermeneutic of Particularity,” *Semeia* no. 90/91 (2002): 145-58.

and can be condensed, for the sake of brevity, into one term: “whiteness.”⁹ In short, “whiteness” refers to a means of organizing our political and social spheres into social groups that exist in a kind of hierarchy connected to, but not fully determined by, phenotype.¹⁰ It is the invisible, governing ideology of the dominant European-descended culture that sets the standards for goodness, beauty, truth, and social appropriateness.¹¹ The question of racialization becomes: to what extent will an individual conform to the standards that have been set by the global powers whose roots remain in colonization and Euro-centrism? As a man racialized white, married to a woman racialized Asian, who has two beautiful boys who most likely will be racialized as ambiguously “white,” “honorary white,” or “non-black,”¹² I do not know the ins and outs of the emerging racialized hierarchy through which my sons must navigate. I do know, however, that the social construct of “whiteness” will be a devil that constantly will be at their heels.

For example, racialized identities tend to use white and black as their orientation points. As

⁹ George Yancey, *Look, A White! Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Carter, *Race*; M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Dwight Hopkins, *Being Human: Religion, Race, and Culture* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

¹¹ See my recent article “To Resist the Gravity of Whiteness: Communicating Racialized Suffering and Creating Paschal Community through an *Analogia Vulneris*.” *Black Theology: An International Journal* 15, no. 2 (2017): 136-55. doi:10.1080/14769948.2017.1326738

¹² These terms come from the works of sociologists Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (white/honorary white/collective black) and George Yancey (black/non-black). See Bonilla-Silva, “Black, Honorary White, White. See George Yancey, “Racial Justice in a Black/Nonblack Society,” in *Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the ‘Color-Blind’ Era*, ed. David Brunsma (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006).

immigrants have flowed into this country, part of the assimilation process has been to differentiate from those who are black. The more an immigrant group could distance themselves from and over and against African Americans—geographically, culturally, economically—the greater became their likelihood for survival and flourishing.¹³ Therefore, the social construct of whiteness has its roots in the denigration and dehumanization of African Americans, among others, and is demonic in the sense that it and the privileges conferred either by entering it or through existing in close proximity to it requires an insidious belief in black inferiority and white superiority, even if often subconscious. As Michael Eric Dyson points out:

...Black bodies that were captured and enslaved reached American shores half dead and soaked in racial guilt. They were guilty of their blackness, guilty of being dangerously different. They were guilty of resisting the loss of their freedom, guilty of their rage at injustice, guilty of trying to escape, guilty of the insubordination of indignation. They were guilty in every way of every crime, and whiteness, in adjudicating their guilt, told itself the very same lie every abusive parent, every batterer, and every spouse killer has told their victim throughout space and time: you made me do it.¹⁴

Any form of life that confers identity through requiring the dehumanization of others is anti-Christian, for in Christ's wounded and resilient body, there can be

¹³ For example, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁴ Michael Eric Dyson, *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017), 100-101.

no superiority and no inferiority. As St. Paul famously pointed out, we are all one in Christ. The social reality of whiteness and the perpetual process of racialization are two of the more insidious parts of my children's inheritance as US citizens and Roman Catholic Christians. These realities will also play a role, conscious or unconscious, in their later decision about whether to embrace Christianity and become part of Christ's wounded and resilient body. The problems of whiteness and racialization are more clearly visible to more people in the United States now than perhaps at any time since the L.A. Riots (1992). Once again, Malcolm X's trenchant critique of Christianity as the white man's religion is (rightly) gaining traction in light of uncritical support of the current presidential administration by majorities of white Catholics and white evangelical Christians.¹⁵ The connection between North Atlantic Christianity, Catholic and otherwise, and whiteness has yet to be severed. Until a critical mass of Christians decides to break this connection and create an alternative, the idolatry of whiteness will continue to saturate our churches.¹⁶ This poses an additional challenge to passing on the faith.

Solidarity with the "Sinned-Against"

These challenges of cultural hybridity, racialization, and whiteness (along with a perceived irrelevance of Christian faith for the "nones") deeply shape the context in which my wife and I wish to pass on our faith to our sons. These challenges, and others, will affect our sons' decisions whether to remain practicing

¹⁵ See the Pew Research Center FactTank on white Christian support for Donald Trump (April 26, 2017) at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/26/among-white-evangelicals-regular-churchgoers-are-the-most-supportive-of-trump/>.

¹⁶ Considine, "To Resist the Gravity of Whiteness," 136-55.

Christians, be it as Catholics or otherwise. A good starting point for passing on the faith is a discipleship of “solidarity with the sinned-against.” That is, hearing the cries of innocent suffering and committing to action to alleviate all that causes such suffering provides a sound foundation for Christian faith. There are three reasons why a solidarity with the “sinned-against” may prove decisive for faith formation.

First, the language of “sinned-against” provides an appropriate place to begin thinking about passing on the faith. It provides a necessary balance and corrective to the traditional emphasis on sinning and the forgiveness of sins. All are sinners and sinned-against; however, the wounds carried by the victims of sin often do not receive sufficient theological attention and pastoral care.¹⁷ Both the social dimension of sinning and the wounds inflicted through being sinned-against remain at the periphery of Catholic sacramental life. For example, the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, as currently practiced, is focused upon absolution for the individual sinner from the personal guilt incurred through sinning against another individual and against God. Rarely do penitents enter into the sacrament to ask forgiveness from participation in social sins in which they are complicit, and catechesis tends to overlook or under-emphasize this equally important dimension of the sacrament. In other words, does a penitent utilize Catholic Social Teaching in his or her examination of conscience in preparing for confession and do confessors consult Catholic Social Teaching to be adequately

¹⁷ This was the conviction of the first generation of Korean *minjung* theologians who declared that the *han* of the sinned-against, rather than the sins of the perpetrator, was the most appropriate place to begin Christian praxis. *Minjung* theologies and their call for a preferential option for the “*han*-ridden,” so to speak, tended to be almost exclusively Protestant, and therefore I do not integrate it into my discussion here.

prepared to offer guidance, penance, and absolution for a person's participation in structural sin? Although I do not have a definitive answer, I suspect that such preparation on behalf of both confessor and penitent in light of Catholic Social Teaching is rare. Also, the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, as currently practiced, is usually administered to a person who is medically ill and, less often, has been administered to men and women struggling against addictions. The administration of the sacrament, however, can encompass the fullness of human woundedness. This sacrament could be offered to those who have been "sinned-against" through structural racism, ecological degradation, or systems that facilitate sexual abuse. In practice, however, I suspect that the sacrament rarely is administered for these manifestations of woundedness and sickness. As I have argued elsewhere,¹⁸ this historical emphasis upon the forgiveness of sins is not a problem *per se*. It is of great importance. It becomes a problem, however, when forgiveness of sins—salvation for sinners—is the exclusive focus of Catholic life and teaching and is not balanced by a robust ministry of salvation for the sinned-against.

The theological term "sinned-against" is rooted in the work of Protestant theologian Raymond Fung and refers to those who are the victims of social and structural sin within a specific context. Fung, writing in the late twentieth century and located in Hong Kong, was convinced that without an emphasis on the economically "sinned-against" the Gospel could be neither fully understood nor accepted in many East Asian cultures.¹⁹ In the US context, Catholic activist

¹⁸ Kevin P. Considine, *Salvation for the Sinned-Against: 'Han' and Schillebeeckx in Intercultural Dialogue* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick), 2015.

¹⁹ Raymond Fung, "Compassion for the Sinned-Against," *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 162-69.

Dorothy Day attracted both adulation and scorn because of her absolute commitment to the care of the “sinned-against” and the elimination of the economic and social structures that enable their suffering and dehumanization. She was convinced that both daily observance of Catholic liturgical and spiritual practice along with a radical commitment to ministering to the wounds of the socially sinned-against comprised a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ. As she reflected upon her work, she observed:

When we suffer, we are told we suffer with Christ. We are “completing the sufferings of Christ.” We suffer his loneliness and fear in the garden while his friends slept. We are bowed down with Him under the weight of not only our own sins but the sins of each other, of the whole world. *We are those who are sinned-against and those who are sinning.* We are identified with Him, one with Him. We are members of His mystical body.²⁰

Day’s commitment and insights, along with Fung’s terminology, provide a starting point. They offer a way to recognize the cries of the “sinned-against,” the unwarranted suffering of so many of God’s children and creatures, and this practice of recognition may animate the faith of the next generation.

Second, the practice of *solidarity* laid out by Catholic Social Teaching offers an appropriate means for putting this theological language into action. Recognition of the suffering of the “sinned-against” is a beginning but in itself is not sufficient. Solidarity with the sinned-

²⁰ Dorothy Day, “We Scarcely Know Ourselves,” in *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings, By Little and By Little*, ed. Robert Ellsberg (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 7 (*italics added*).

against requires more than sentimentality or nice slogans. It requires concrete action. Pope John Paul II articulated the importance of a solidarity based on action. Solidarity, he wrote,

...is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38).

This detail is particularly important for the younger generations because of their relationship with social media. The younger generations are interconnected with others (at least on a surface level) as never before in human history. For many youth, their online presence can be an extension of their lives that becomes as important as physical presence. For evidence, one need to look no farther than the proliferation of “cyber bullying,” “sexting,” and other forms of cyber-interaction that may have long-lasting consequences.

John Paul II’s description of solidarity, then, challenges us to put our feelings of compassion into concrete action. Although the importance and usefulness of social media for raising consciousness should not be underestimated, solidarity is more than self-expression on Facebook, Twitter, or other platforms. Rather, solidarity requires physical presence and action. For example, in 2015 my students in a course on Social Justice decided to stand in solidarity with local oil refinery workers who were on strike. They did not just raise awareness but also walked the picket lines, helped

organize a rally, provided food for the striking workers' families, and then brought their action into dialogue with Catholic Social Teaching.

Third, solidarity with the sinned-against provides an important witness to the presence of Christ that abides in the world. It is an incarnational way of living out one's faith that pushes back against all forms of US Christianity that offer pious platitudes without action. It harmonizes not only with Roman Catholicism but also with a Korean American heritage. Inter-group solidarity is what enabled a minority immigrant community to survive and for its children to thrive in a new nation and culture that often has been unwelcoming and even hostile to the arrival and continued presence of non-white immigrant groups. If such concrete solidarity were expanded to recognize the cries of others in the United States who are sinned-against, the Korean American Catholic community could reflect the saving presence of God to numerous others. As the former pontiff pointed out:

Solidarity helps us to see the "other" – whether a person, people or nation – not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our "neighbor," a "helper" (cf. Gn 2:18-20), to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. Hence the importance of reawakening the religious awareness of individuals and peoples. Thus the exploitation, oppression and annihilation of others are excluded (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 39).

Closing Reflection: Looking Towards Future Work

As my sons grow, I hope and pray they will mature into men who love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with God (Mi 6:8). Or, as my father-in-law says, I hope and pray that they “become human” (*saram-i doeda*). Their context of cultural hybridity, racialized ambiguity, and technological saturation is horribly complex and challenging to navigate. I am convinced that the future of passing on the Christian faith is connected to a discipleship of solidarity with the “sinned-against,” that is, a way of living as Christ’s body in the world that seeks healing, justice, reconciliation, and peacemaking. Obviously, we all are sinners *and* sinned-against. We all need constant forgiveness of our sins and new starts to create a better life.

Nevertheless, the practice of living the Christian faith also requires sufficient attention to the plight of the “sinned-against.” In our family, one way that we have decided to pass on the faith in this way is through bringing our children to prayer vigils and protests. When the teenage boy LaQuan McDonald was shot and killed by Chicago Police Officers in October 2014, I took my boys to a prayer vigil and protest organized by various religious leaders in front of police headquarters. And, when a young man who was home from college was shot and killed in our neighborhood we attended the local prayer vigil and lamented at the murder scene. We decided that our sons need to experience God’s presence in these gatherings of prayer, lament, and nonviolent protest. Moreover, these actions connect to our situation of cultural hybridity in that God’s presence is always already here, and we need to attune ourselves to God’s presence in the cultural complexity that they are inheriting. We are hoping to pass on a faith that, through solidarity, is connected to memory, resistance, and

hope;²¹ memory of cultural inheritance and the honoring of those who have come before, resistance to all that dehumanizes our brothers and sisters in Christ and in the human family, and hope that through discerning and following God's abiding Spirit among us we can participate in bringing about a more just world.

The younger generations exhibit empathy, compassion, tolerance, and a potential consciousness of injustice in a way that often surpasses that of their parents and elders. Although they need maturity, wisdom, and much more, their concern for the "sinned-against" and not just for their own individual salvation is admirable and hopefully contagious to others. It is a mustard seed for faith that, if nurtured and guided, may lead not only to the transmission of the Christian faith in a context of cultural hybridity and racialization but to the revitalization of it as a powerful force for bringing about a more just world in which the image of God in all creatures will be recognized and respected.

²¹ David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper & Row), 1987.



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Healing Families and Faith Communities Through Stories

Elizabeth Anne Park

You are your stories. You are the product of all the stories you have heard and lived – and many that you have never heard. They have shaped how you see yourself, the world, and your place in it. Your first great storytellers were home, school, popular culture, and, perhaps, church. Knowing and embracing healthy stories are crucial in living rightly and well. If your present life story is broken or diseased, it can be made well. Or, if necessary, it can be replaced by a story that has a plot worth living.

Daniel Taylor

The reverence I have for people's narratives in my work as a clinical psychologist stems from my own connections of how my early childhood stories have formed me into the person I am today. I grew up in upstate New York where I reveled in discovering a forest of natural treasures just in my backyard. I lifted kindling to find what seemed like millions of red spiders scurrying in every direction and rolled up pillbugs between my fingers for the sheer joy of it. I picked blackberries, never minding my scratched arms and legs, and felt the crisp autumn wind on my skin as richly colored leaves shifted and swayed around me. I wondered how many frog families were croaking in the sudden swamp that formed after a heavy spring rain. These physical, visual, sensory, and auditory exchanges with nature nourished me emotionally and spiritually. They contributed to the foundation for my worldview

and an ecological understanding of human behavior and relationships.

Like many immigrant Korean American households, multiple generations lived under one roof when I was a young child. My father was frequently away for long stretches of time in Korea to financially support our family while my mother worked the night shift for a local company. Therefore, many of the memories of my youth are of spending hours with grandparents, who watched my sister and me while our parents were away.

Growing up in upstate New York also meant that we were the only Korean family in our neighborhood and subjected to constant micro-aggressions.¹ Curious, often well-intentioned individuals would ask us, “*Where are you really from, Are you from Japan or China, don’t you eat anything else other than rice?*” In addition, there were continuous reminders that my family was unlike others around us. I remember feeling upset that my mom did not provide us with all the classics of a Thanksgiving meal—turkey, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, dinner rolls, etc.—just the way I saw on television. I was convinced that our Thanksgiving meal, with the inclusion of kimchi and the absence of green bean casserole, was “incomplete,” different, and, therefore, inferior to the Thanksgiving meals I was certain my classmates were having. While the effects of ethnocentric monoculturalism led to feeling excluded, isolated, misrepresented, and misunderstood, as well as to a perpetual sense of “not belonging,” I was also exposed to

¹ Microaggressions are the “constant and continuing reality of slights, insults, invalidations and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned, moral and decent family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, students, teachers, clerks, waiters and waitresses, employers, health care professionals and educators.” See Derald Wing Sue, *Microaggressions in Daily Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), xv.

multiple protective factors that helped me integrate and make meaning out of my fragmented experiences as a minority. My relationship with my grandfather and the stories he told me also cultivated resilience, empathy, and compassion for others—alternative perspectives from the possible harmful effects of living as a minority. Thus, my ability to imagine and actively experience the interconnectedness between things was largely cultivated by the special relationship I had with my monolingual, Korean-speaking grandfather.

My grandfather was a skilled storyteller who demonstrated both practicing and representing characteristics.² I remember falling asleep next to my grandfather as he told me old Korean folktales about tigers and throwing red pepper into burglars' eyes. I can still vividly remember how I envisioned the cartoonish tigers, with their bulging eyes and sinister intentions, trying to snatch up innocent village girls while valiant family members plotted to keep the tigers at bay. These stories held a plot, with embedded morals and values, to teach me lessons about good overcoming evil. I remember being engrossed in these small and big stories, which is not surprising, because children are like sponges. They soak up what they see and experience in their environment and are responsive to their caregiver's attention. Caregivers therefore have the potential to become a powerful source of resilience throughout their lifespans as role models and moral compasses.

² Representing characteristics refers to the message the family is trying to communicate, how the content of the story is understood, and what the story means. Practicing characteristics refers to the act of storytelling, such as how the story is told, who is doing the talking, and who is listening. See Michael W. Pratt and Barbara H. Fiese, "Families, Stories, and the Life Course: An Ecological Context," in *Family Stories and the Life Course*, ed. Michael W. Pratt and Barbara H. Fiese (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2004), 6.

The stories regarding the religious persecution my grandparents endured during the Japanese occupation were more raw and complex, and made a different kind of lasting imprint on my values and identity. I always felt a sense of awe when reflecting upon my grandparents' perseverance and courage in holding "illegal masses" in their backyard and repeatedly risking their lives to practice their faith. Despite all the other messages I received about being an outsider, unworthy, inadequate, and irreconcilably different growing up, my family's stories pointed towards a road, paved by my grandfather's love, that winds to the core of who I am. These stories allow me to experience myself and others as good and lovable, and act as a protective buffer or a map in navigating difficult and challenging life events and circumstances.

As a clinical psychologist specializing in trauma, my role is to assist children and families navigate difficult experiences. I seek to understand how multi-stressed individuals and families cope with and even thrive under difficult circumstances. This curiosity has led me on a journey to investigate and explore how stories may be used within immigrant faith communities to help families heal and support their resiliency. Reflecting upon my own family's stories, clinical experiences, and literature on historical contexts, acculturation influences, and storytelling has led to the following realizations: 1) stories have the capacity to enhance relationships, 2) stories contribute to spiritual development, and 3) stories bridge generational gaps by addressing some of the issues with acculturation in immigrant families.

Function of Family Stories

Storytelling is a natural part of family life that serves the basic function of relating experiences to one

another and creating meaning regarding life events as a whole. Stories told exist in books, are orally transmitted, passed through generations, shared in diverse settings (for example, at home, school, and church), and serve multiple and overlapping purposes. In addition, stories that invite through phrases such as “How are you?” and “You’re never going to guess what happened to me!” are an important part of building relationships and social development.³

Storytelling is also part of family rituals and a means of coping with changes, hardships, oppression, grief, and loss. In religious rituals and ceremonies that mark important historical and relational events (for example, the birth of a new member, entry into adulthood, marriage, and death), the family is central. Often times, family stories highlight these significant historical and relational events and rites of passage. Cultural, societal, or familial rituals can decrease anxiety during times of transition or when facing difficulties, due to their unique ability to anchor people to their past as well as move them into the future simultaneously.⁴ As a result, stories allow for a sense of membership or belonging to a family or group and facilitate healing of losses while maintaining and changing personal or collective identities.

Storytelling between caregivers and children can greatly influence a child’s personal and collective identities, because these identities are informed by their social interactions. Sharing stories with children helps support their emotional and social development.

³ Daniel Taylor, *The Healing Power of Stories* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 6.

⁴ Evan Imber-Black, “Creating Meaningful Rituals for New Life Cycle Transitions,” in *The Expanded Family Life Cycle: Individual, Family, and Social Perspectives*, ed. Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2005), 202.

Children have the potential to learn how to identify their feelings, identify other people's feelings, engage in perspective taking, develop empathy, and learn social skills through stories. Children are able to tell richer, more complete narratives as well as understand other people's thoughts and emotions when parents reminisce about everyday events in detailed ways.⁵ When parents or grandparents share family stories, children become exposed to their family's history, which research shows is significantly correlated with high self-esteem, greater internal locus of control,⁶ healthier family functioning, increased family cohesiveness, lower levels of anxiety, and fewer behavior problems.⁷ For adolescents, knowing their family history is associated with more robust identities, stronger coping skills, and lower rates of mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.⁸ Adolescents also show higher levels of well-being when they are able to tell stories rich in intergenerational connections that include perspective-taking. Grandparents may share stories with their grandchildren that involve themes of justice, care, and kindness, which serves the function of teaching and communicating family beliefs, morals, and values.

⁵ Elaine Reese and Rhiannon Newcombe, "Training Mothers in Elaborative Reminiscing Enhances Children's Autobiographical Memory and Narrative," *Child Development* 78, no. 4 (2007): 1153. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01058.x

⁶ A person with an internal locus of control believes they can influence events and their outcome.

⁷ Marshall Duke, Amber Lazarus, and Robyn Fivush, "Knowledge of Family History as a Clinically Useful Index of Psychological Well-Being and Prognosis: A Brief Report," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 45, no. 2 (2008): 268.

⁸ Robyn Fivush, Jennifer G. Bohanek, and Widaad Zaman, "Personal and Intergenerational Narratives in Relation to Adolescents' Well-Being," *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 131 (2011): 45. doi:10.1002/cd.288

Stories have the capacity to enhance our personal relationships by illuminating our historical and familial roots and deepening our sense of connectedness to others. Stories also have the function of further merging and integrating our religious and spiritual experiences by personalizing and contextualizing religious traditions and practices. When grandparents, parents, or other family members share family stories that contain religious content, they provide a loving relational context with which to understand religious concepts that connect the child and family to a broader religious community.

Korean American churches (both Protestant and Catholic) serve multiple, overlapping functions by fostering a religious and cultural home. Due to societal marginalization as immigrants, Korean Americans tend to gravitate towards these ethnic faith communities for religious as well as social support. As Korean immigrants embrace familial stories that contain religious and spiritual themes to help them cope with and make meaning out of the marginalizing experience of immigration, Korean American Catholic stories emerge from the encounter of familial stories within the faith community's narrative. Therefore, narratives in faith communities also serve a variety of functions, including fostering development of members' identity, defining community membership, building a sense of community, facilitating personal change, and coping with adversity or increasing empowerment.⁹ Localized narratives that are created in ethnic faith communities assist immigrants where the "dominant cultural

⁹ Eric S. Mankowski and Julian Rappaport, "Narrative Concepts and Analysis in Spiritually-Based Communities," *Journal of Community Psychology* 28, no. 5 (2000): 479.

narratives fail to adequately represent the lived experience of individuals.”¹⁰

Challenges in Sharing our Stories

Challenges exist for Korean American families when sharing their stories due to language barriers between generations. For Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) families, generational differences exacerbated by the acculturation process can potentially lead to increased family conflict and misunderstanding.¹¹ Generational and cultural conflict occur when parental expectations to maintain traditional API values, such as filial piety, are at odds with mainstream society values. Thus, acculturation conflicts are associated with higher levels of stress, poorer mental health, physical health problems, and parenting conflicts.¹² Korean American Catholic communities create opportunities for youth, parents, and older generations to receive support from peers who understand their cultural upbringing. Sharing family stories within this religious and cultural context assists youth and older generations in understanding each other’s perspectives and bridging these gaps. For example, younger generations may feel a sense of purpose (but also burden and/or responsibility) when hearing the reasons and circumstances surrounding the

¹⁰ Mankowski and Rappaport, “Narrative Concepts and Analysis,” 479.

¹¹ Acculturation refers to a process of cultural adaption that is triggered by intercultural contact and results in psychosocial changes. Attitudes, behaviors, norms, knowledge, and identity experiences shift as a result of coming into contact with cultures different from their culture of origin.

¹² Matthew J. Miller, Minji Yang, Jerome A. Farrell, and Li-Ling Lin, “Racial and Cultural Factors Affecting the Mental Health of Asian Americans,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81, no. 4 (2011): 489. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2011.01118.x

older generations' immigration to the United States. A common theme within Korean American immigration stories involves parents sacrificing their own comforts and working hard to set their children up for success in America. First-generation Korean American Catholics may feel their immigration was made possible due to God's provision and as a part of God's greater plan, not only for them but for the future generations. The construction of these stories and embedded themes of associating immigration with a greater purpose may assist Korean American families in enduring and coping with acculturative stressors and challenges.

While sharing family stories comes naturally to most families and typically occurs during family meals, leisure time, and special events (for example, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, holidays), storytelling can be particularly challenging and even distressing for families who have experienced overwhelming, painful, or terrifying events. When events are too overwhelming or horrifying to recall and share without becoming emotionally reactive, a neutral narrative cannot be achieved. Without this neutral narrative, families are unable to engage one another due to their inability to navigate intense emotions. The family struggles in creating a sense of safety through empathic listening, in which the storyteller may be emotionally expressive while demonstrating attunement to others' reactions, thus supporting emotional coregulation.¹³ The lasting impact of this dysfunction is that storytelling no longer serves its function and what emerges are stories

¹³ Laurel J. Kiser, Barbara Baumgardner, and Joyce Dorado, "Who Are We, But for the Stories We Tell: Family Stories and Healing," *Psychological Trauma, Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 2, no. 3 (2010): 245; See also Rudi Dallos, "Attachment Narrative Therapy: Integrating Ideas from Narrative and Attachment Theory in Systemic Family Therapy with Eating Disorders," *Journal of Family Therapy* 26 (2004): 48. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6427.2004.00266.x

containing pathologizing themes with unhelpful thoughts and beliefs that restrict the family members' view of themselves, others, and possibilities for a hopeful future.¹⁴

Another barrier to sharing stories relates to the role, function, and enforcement of silence in Korean American families. Silence about historical trauma is common among survivors and its resulting consequences can have rippling effects on future generations despite the geographic distance. Although silence may provide short-term benefits, restricting expressions ultimately impedes healing and recovery and is a "medium through which the intergenerational effects of catastrophic experiences are transmitted."¹⁵ For older Korean Americans whose lives were directly impacted by the Korean War, silence may be a protective mechanism against feeling pain or shame, reinforced by family communication patterns and cultural factors, and is also enforced at state and societal levels as well.¹⁶ The popular messages that regard the war as "forgotten" and a victory won by the United States over communism are influenced by state or political interests and suppress alternative conceptualizations and personal accounts regarding the impact of living through the actual conflict.¹⁷

Due to the enforcement of silence and difficulty in entertaining alternative conceptualizations of intergenerational and historical trauma, it is important to consider how storytelling within Korean American families is additionally impacted by other

¹⁴ Kiser, Baumgardner, and Dorado, "Who Are We," 246.

¹⁵ Ramsay Liem, "Silencing Historical Trauma: The Politics and Psychology of Memory and Voice," *Peace & Conflict* 13, no. 2 (2007): 153. doi:10.1080/10781910701271200

¹⁶ Liem, "Silencing Historical Trauma," 158.

¹⁷ Liem, "Silencing Historical Trauma," 158.

communication factors. Communication in Korean American families is complex and impacted by factors such as language, differences in acculturation, hierarchical age, and gender relations.¹⁸ Storytelling is often initiated by the older person, and cultural values (for example, saving face) can result in difficulty in expressing harsh life experiences. In addition, regardless of their age, children often knowingly or unknowingly do not want to stir up feelings of sadness regarding situations they have no control over in the lives of parents and grandparents. In traditional Korean society, overt expressions of emotions, particularly anger, were discouraged, which can lead to suppressed and accumulated feelings and experiences.¹⁹ Another factor to consider regarding communication in Korean American families is that there may be expectations for children to first listen and then speak after being addressed by their parents or an elder. This type of parent/child communication pattern and cultural expectations, coupled with a fear of triggering negative emotions and reactions, serves as a multi-barrier reinforcing traumatic memory that further enforces family silence.

Closing Reflection

As a young child, I had great difficulty understanding and reconciling what I felt were two drastic realities. At home, I was granddaughter, eldest daughter, and older sister, with all the cultural expectations those roles entailed, while at school I struggled to fit in. I remember in kindergarten an

¹⁸ Liem, "Silencing Historical Trauma," 172.

¹⁹ Irene J. Kim, Luke I. C. Kim, and James G. Kelly, "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no. 2 (2006): 149-165. doi:10.1002/jcop.20093

interaction with a school principal, who stopped me while I was walking to the bathroom and asked me where I was going. In a show of respect, I did not make eye contact with her, which prompted an angry response: "When I talk to you, you look me directly in the eye and answer!" I remember feeling confused and petrified by the principal's anger because in my home, my parents held the cultural view that looking an adult in the eye is disrespectful, especially when being reprimanded. I never told my parents about what happened because developmentally I could not describe the complexity of that interaction and my resulting internal state.

Even if children sometimes struggle to articulate their experiences, they still possess a human drive to make sense and meaning out of them. When I was in first grade, my class was instructed to share about our family backgrounds with another class. I told a bold-faced lie to the entire kindergarten class that I was born on an airplane right in the middle between Korea and the United States, and as a result have free flights for the rest of my life. It was a fantastical and wistful story, even creative in hindsight, but also a reflection of how confused I was about myself and how I fit in with the world around me. At home, I felt a deep sense of safety and connection, hearing my grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles talk about their experiences living in Korea, then immigrating to the United States. The laughter we shared when my parents talked about everyday mishaps due to language barriers or novel experiences such as tasting a banana for the first time when they first came to America eased the pain I felt from constantly feeling excluded or misunderstood. My grandparents' stories of survival, of getting through quite difficult events together, put my own struggles in context and in perspective. While the direct expression of

certain feelings may not be encouraged in traditional Korean homes, I felt an emotional connection from being included in my family's stories of hardships, challenges, strength, opportunities, and possibilities.

When shared within a supportive environment, stories possess the potential to connect individuals to a greater context in understanding who they are, leading to reduced shame and increasing compassion for themselves as well as others. Stories are invitations to reflect upon one's personal experiences as well as opportunities to enter into the experiences of others to better understand their perspective. They restore the loss of voices, invoke courage, inspire change, and invite individuals to be a part of a greater community beyond themselves.



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Charity is the Heart of the Church

Engaging Korean American Catholics Today

James K. Lee

In Easter 2002, I was received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church after having been raised in a Korean Presbyterian community. I was drawn not only to the rich liturgical life of Catholicism, but also to the historical and theological resources within the Catholic tradition. In particular, I was moved by the emphasis upon charity in the pursuit of unity in the early church, as evident in North African communities during the fourth and fifth centuries. I found in the works of theologians such as St. Cyprian and St. Augustine a way to move beyond the exclusion and sectarianism I had experienced in my encounters with some contemporary Christian communities. For Augustine, charity is the heart of the church, and true charity provides a way to overcome the divisions that separate generations and factions within Christianity.¹ In this chapter, I explore how an Augustinian notion of charity enables Korean American Catholics to overcome the tendencies toward exclusion and division between generations toward the goal of reconciliation in the church today.

A Church of Exclusion or Inclusion

In the context of Roman North Africa in the third century, the onset of persecution beginning in 249

¹ Some of the research for this chapter has appeared in an article entitled, "The Church and the Holy Spirit: Ecclesiology and Pneumatology in Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine," *Studia Patristica* 91, no. 17 (2017): 189-206.

revealed the fault lines among Christian communities. Many renounced their allegiance to Christ and the church and submitted to traditional practices of Roman idolatry. The controversial issue of readmitting into the community those who had lapsed brought to the forefront the very criteria of ecclesial identity. What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a member of the church?

In the third century, Tertullian of Carthage defined the church in direct relation to the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiology was necessarily related to pneumatology, for the source of ecclesial unity was found in the work of the Spirit in and through the church. Competing approaches regarding the nature of the Spirit's work became the subject of debate and controversy in early North Africa, particularly in the context of the persecution of Christians and the question of the readmission of the lapsed back into the community. Desiring more exclusivity, Tertullian was the proponent of a kind of rigorism that demanded the demonstration of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, to ensure membership in the church. Such a demonstration was lacking in those who had renounced their faith under persecution. Furthermore, those who held positions of ecclesiastical authority were not guaranteed the presence and activity of the Spirit. Thus, there developed an increasing tension between the church's charismatic dimensions and its visible, institutional marks. Such beliefs were prone to excluding those who had fallen away rather than finding avenues of welcoming and re-engaging the lapsed.

In today's parochial model, this tendency toward exclusion and sectarianism can be seen in communities that insist upon particular markers of inclusion, such as speaking certain languages and maintaining specific cultural norms. These markers of inclusion may take

precedence over the visible, sacramental ties that bind the church. The result is an exclusivist model that perpetuates division and hostility toward outsiders.

In contrast to Tertullian, early North African leaders such as St. Cyprian and St. Augustine sought to overcome division and separation by developing a process of readmitting lapsed Christians. This included practices of penance prior to being welcomed back into the eucharistic assembly. Correlatively, their acts of reintegration began to articulate a more inclusive understanding of church membership.²

The church is at once charismatic and institutional, an invisible society of believers and a visible body that celebrates the sacraments. For Augustine, the church's unity in charity is grounded in the unity of the Trinity, as a gift given by the Holy Spirit and mediated through the sacraments. Augustine maintains the church's visible unity as a sign of the invisible union of the Spirit and further argues that the Spirit may work beyond visible bounds so as to bring those outside of the visible church into communion with the one body of Christ at some future time. Augustine also distinguishes between the church's historical and eschatological dimensions, providing a way to affirm the work of the Spirit to bring all into unity with the one church. These views laid the foundation for the pursuit of unity among Christians in North Africa in the midst of schism and persecution.

Cyprian likewise affirms the church's unity around participation in the sacraments. He takes up Biblical images to speak of the church as one, precisely as mother and bride. Song of Songs 6:9 is an indication of the one church, for "my dove is one, my perfect one,

² J. Patout Burns, "Establishing Unity in Diversity," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 4 (2005): 381-99.

chosen of she who bore her.”³ The church is a mother by virtue of the sacrament of baptism, by which she “seals her sons, to whom she has given birth, for the kingdom,” and so Cyprian declares that “he cannot have God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother,” and one who is outside of the church is outside of the ark.⁴

For Cyprian, these images of the church as body, bride, mother, and ark do not evoke a church free from the presence of those who have sinned. Perfection does not depend upon the presence or absence of sinners in the community, but rather upon the work of the Triune God to unite the church in the perfect bond of charity, the charity maintained by union with the bishop and the worldwide episcopacy. These bonds have an eschatological aim insofar as they are the means of union with the blessed, in anticipation of a final eschatological communion. Cyprian does not collapse the eschatological *ecclesia* with the historical church on journey, for while there is an eschatological urgency in expectation of an imminent end, the church is pure and holy now as the one spouse of Christ, awaiting final judgment.

In Cyprian’s view, there may be tares in the church along with the wheat, for the judgment of God is more complex than a simple separation of the church from the world.⁵ God’s mercy and judgment are ever active, in anticipation of the final judgment. Cyprian maintains that where the Spirit is, the church is, yet the Spirit manifests power in and through the visible, institutional church, which dispenses the mercy of God through the sacraments, and which binds the church in

³ Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-) [hereafter CCSL] 3, 252.

⁴ Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6, CCSL 3, 253.

⁵ Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 10, CCSL 3, 256-7.

charity.⁶ Thus, there is no tension between the charismatic and institutional church, for it belongs to the power of the Spirit to work through the visible, hierarchical church celebrating the sacraments.⁷ Being in communion with the visible church is a necessary but not sufficient condition for salvation, for it belongs to God to separate the good from the wicked at the final judgment, and even those who have been readmitted to communion may not presume upon admission into the kingdom of heaven.

Like Cyprian, Augustine finds no necessary tension between the visible church and the invisible work of the Spirit. For Augustine, the church's unity is grounded in the Trinity, for the charity "poured out on our hearts" (Rom 5:5) is nothing less than the Holy Spirit, who binds the members of the church together as one body.⁸ The very same Spirit through whom the persons of the Trinity are joined⁹ is the glue that binds the church.¹⁰ In his sermons on Pentecost, Augustine declares, "whoever has the Holy Spirit is in the church...whoever is outside this church does not have the Holy Spirit."¹¹ Augustine follows Cyprian by citing Ephesians 4:4, declaring there is one body and one spirit. Yet Augustine goes further by considering how the parts of the body, while distinct, are kept together by the "one spirit" (*unus spiritus*). "What our spirit, that is, our soul, is to the parts or members of our body, that the Holy

⁶ Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 9, CCSL 3, 255-6.

⁷ Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4, 6-8, 15, 19.

⁸ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 7.3.5, CCSL 50, 253.

⁹ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 6.5.7.

¹⁰ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5.11.12; 15.17.29. Joseph T. Lienhard, "'The Glue Itself is Charity': Ps 62:9 in Augustine's Thought," in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 375-84.

¹¹ Augustine, *Sermones* 268.2. This sermon was delivered in the year 405.

Spirit is to the members of Christ, to the body of Christ.”¹² The Holy Spirit is the soul of the church, precisely as the soul of the one body of Christ.

For Augustine, the church’s unity as one body with one soul, that is, the Spirit, does not result in tension between the charismatic and institutional church. Following Cyprian, Augustine interprets the Paraclete passages of John 16 in light of the commissioning of the apostles, particularly Peter, who is a sign of the church’s unity. Peter represents the whole church in confessing Christ as the Son of God, yet the apostles also possess a particular mission. Augustine observes that the disciples were too focused on outward appearance, which they interpreted in a “fleshly” (*carnalis*) way; they had to turn from being “fleshly” to being “spiritual” (*spiritalis*), which can only happen by the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹³ The disciples must undergo a transformation from carnal to spiritual, a transformation that Augustine links to the sacraments. The sacraments mediate the transformative work of the Spirit, and so the “spiritual ones” are not limited either to the apostles nor to the elite few who manifest the power of the Spirit by virtue of certain charismatic gifts. Instead, the spiritual ones are those who participate in the sacraments celebrated by the church throughout the world.¹⁴

Augustine argues that church membership cannot be limited to a particular constituency. Although he recognizes that some may cut themselves off from the effects of the sacraments, as in the case of the Donatists, such that the transformation from carnal to spiritual is

¹² Augustine, *Sermones* 268.2, in *Patrologia Latina Cursus Completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris:1844–1864) [hereafter PL] 38, 1232; see also *Sermones* 267.4.

¹³ Augustine, *Sermones* 270.1, PL 38, 1238.

¹⁴ The unity of the church is impressed upon those participating in the eucharistic liturgy of the church, spread throughout the world; Augustine, *Sermones* 268.1, PL 38, 1232.

not simply a matter of receiving the sacraments, it is clear that Augustine does not place the visible, institutional church over against the spiritual, for one becomes spiritual precisely through participation in the sacraments.¹⁵ Cyprian and Augustine provide a way to overcome the cultural and generational differences among the members of the church by emphasizing shared participation in the sacraments, which engender charity and unity in the one body of Christ.

The Work of the Spirit

Like his predecessors Tertullian and Cyprian, Augustine has recourse to many Biblical images of the church, including the church as mother and bride. Unlike Tertullian, Augustine uses these images to distinguish between the church in her historical condition and in eschatological glory. While Tertullian collapses this distinction, Augustine develops it to demonstrate how the church's holiness is not dependent upon her members, but rather depends upon the distinctive work of the Spirit in the church's particular conditions. The church is heavenly mother, yet she is also mother by virtue of her celebration of the sacraments while on pilgrimage during this time, for she gives birth to her members through baptism, and in this way she is always holy, for she mediates the life-giving work of the Spirit.¹⁶ Further, Augustine affirms the role of the bishop in preserving ecclesial unity, yet he does not place the burden of holiness upon the bishop himself, but rather upon the invisible work of the Spirit.

Augustine uses the image of the church as bride from Song of Songs to demonstrate that the church is

¹⁵ Augustine, *Sermones* 4.9.

¹⁶ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.6.7, CCSL 32, 35.

holy because of the presence and activity of the Spirit.¹⁷ This holiness is not dependent upon the presence or absence of sinners in the church, whether among the laity or the ministers. Against the Donatists, who limit the church to a sinless group in North Africa, Augustine argues that the church is a “mixed body” (*corpus permixtum*) of good and wicked, wheat and tares, and no one can determine who will be the wheat in the end.¹⁸ The church remains holy insofar as she mediates the Spirit by her sacramental life while on pilgrimage. Only at the eschaton will the tares be removed. During this time, however, holiness is not preserved by the exclusion of sinners from the fold, for that would amount to a certain kind of pride. For Augustine, the church’s holiness does not depend upon the members; rather, the holiness of the church is derived from the Spirit’s invisible work to bring all into unity, both now and at the end time.

Similarly, Augustine employs the image of the church as the body of Christ to distinguish between the pilgrim church and the eschatological kingdom. The members of Christ’s body on earth must follow the head to heaven by enduring the trials and temptations of the present time.¹⁹ The church is in a process of transformation and transfiguration, such that the carnal become spiritual, yet there is only one body, for there is only one Christ.

Using the distinction between the historical and eschatological church, Augustine is able to integrate the visible and invisible aspects of the church in a way that

¹⁷ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.6.7, CCSL 32, 35. See also *De baptismo* 6.2.3.

¹⁸ Carole Straw, “Augustine as Pastoral Theologian: The Exegesis of the Parables of the Field and Threshing Floor,” *Augustinian Studies* 14 (1983): 121-52.

¹⁹ Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 86.5, CCSL 39, 1202.

Tertullian, or Cyprian for that matter, cannot. For Augustine, there is only one church, the church that celebrates the sacraments, that is, the visible, institutional church. At the same time, there is an invisible communion of charity that transcends visible bounds, for the Spirit can work beyond visible limits. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is a separate, invisible communion of believers apart from the visible church. Instead, Augustine argues that those who are outside the church but belong to the communion of charity will be brought into unity with the one church “at some future time.”²⁰ The Holy Spirit is at work to bring all into unity, and there is only one church, which exists in particular conditions, historical, and eschatological.²¹

Further, the key pneumatological claim is that the Holy Spirit cannot be limited by any visible markers, even as the Spirit can and does work visibly. That is, for Augustine, no one can claim possession of the Spirit by virtue of certain demonstrations of power. The Holy Spirit cannot be confined to any constituency, for no one knows from where the Spirit comes and goes (Jn 3:8), and the Spirit works to bring all into final unity. Meanwhile, the church on earth is a sign of the future unity of the eschatological church, as signified by Noah’s ark, which “now floats on the waves of the world, and is saved from drowning by the wood of Christ’s cross.”²² Noah’s ark functions both as an image of the church on pilgrimage and in eschatological perfection, for the ark is a “sacrament of the future church” (*sacramentum futurae*

²⁰ Augustine, *De baptismo* 4.3.4, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna: Tempsky, 1865–) [hereafter CSEL] 51, 225–6.

²¹ Jaroslav Pelikan asserts, “There were not two churches, one historical and the other eternal, but one single church that was both historical and eternal,” in *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), 102–3.

²² Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 19.32, CCSL 46, 156–7.

ecclesiae).²³ For Augustine, the visible church on earth that celebrates the sacraments is a sign of the eschatological city of God. The church's unity and holiness are not reserved solely for the eschaton, nor are they dependent upon the presence or absence of sinners in the fold, but rather they find their source in the Spirit, who works to unite the church now and in the future.

As we have seen, Augustine follows Cyprian by maintaining the unity of the church as visible and invisible, institutional and charismatic. Augustine further develops the distinction between the historical church on pilgrimage and the eschatological church in a way that Cyprian does not, yet Augustine remains in continuity with his predecessor. Both Cyprian and Augustine construct ecclesiologies that affirm the power and work of the Holy Spirit, while maintaining the unity of the visible, institutional church. By doing so, these North African bishops effectively refocus the question of ecclesial identity. Membership in the church is not determined by a demonstration of certain charismatic gifts, but rather by participation in a sacramental community. Further, the holiness of the church does not depend upon the presence or absence of sinners in her midst, but rather upon the power and work of the Spirit, both visibly and invisibly. Augustine goes further than Cyprian by removing the burden of proof from all the members of the church, including the bishops, and by establishing the church's holiness based on the Spirit's activity both now and at the end time. Cyprian and Augustine successfully mitigate the rigorism of Tertullian and provide the theological foundation for readmitting the lapsed and forging unity in the midst of diversity.

²³ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 27.53, CCSL 46, 175. See *De baptismo* 5.28.39, in which Augustine identifies the mystery of the church's eschatological perfection contained in the figure of the ark.

Furthermore, both Cyprian and Augustine seek to mitigate a kind of elitist exclusivity. For Cyprian, this means recognizing the distinction between the visible, institutional church and the invisible work of the Spirit while establishing the unity maintained by the episcopacy, for the Spirit works precisely through the visible church. Augustine further develops a pneumatology in which the Spirit works beyond visible bounds. The work of the Spirit while the church is on journey is always toward the same end, namely, the unity of the one church, which will be realized fully at the eschaton. Augustine and Cyprian provide a way to affirm the unity and holiness of the church while making room for sinners in her midst. By the fifth century in North Africa, we find a more inclusive ecclesiology that does not compromise the unity and holiness of the church.

If indeed we find in these Latin Fathers the development of a more inclusive ecclesiology, then we have discovered a rich resource for contemporary ecclesiology, not in the least for its ecumenical potential. In particular, it provides a way to integrate the visible and invisible aspects of the church toward the aim of final unity, as a gift given by God. This is a way forward both for charismatic communities (perhaps of the Pentecostal variety) seeking to affirm some visible signs of communion and for larger, mainline groups or Christian denominations looking to develop bonds of unity that go beyond visible, social markers. The challenge of fostering practices of reconciliation among Christian communities remains, yet there is at least a theological basis for a sophisticated understanding of ecclesial unity that accounts for the visible and invisible aspects of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Thus, the study of the ecclesiology of the Latin

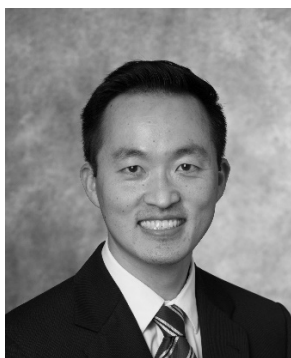
Fathers may bear fruit for the church on journey until, in the end, all are one.

Closing Reflection

Although not exhaustive, many of the cultural and generational issues of Korean American Catholics have been raised by the contributors of this book. A common theme that emerges, regardless of generations, is the need for cultural religious space to foster greater participation. For Korean American Catholics, immigrants took the initiative to carve out the needed worship space to help them survive both physically and spiritually in their new home. The next generation could not match the numbers, resources, nor the necessary desire to create their own space. Nor did they inherit their parents' church. Furthermore, many have fallen away from their faith, and are now facing the challenge of reintegration into a worshipping community. To enhance the generational longevity of Korean American Catholic churches, it is necessary to provide a way to overcome the obstacles and differences between generations. The development of a more inclusive ecclesiology by Latin Fathers such as Cyprian and Augustine offers a path forward by emphasizing the union in charity among the one body of Christ, which is made possible by a shared participation in the sacraments of the church. This shared identity by sacramental participation allows for diversity and provides a pattern for communities to welcome those of different generations and cultures.

In addition, Korean American Catholics would do well to seek humility over pride, a necessary condition for charity in an Augustinian ecclesiology. That is, the members of the church ought to serve others rather than themselves, and they should place themselves at the service of the church rather than

approaching the church as mere consumers. The way of charity requires the imitation of Christ, who became a servant in true humility. Likewise, those from different cultures and generations can foster unity and charity by serving others, despite the differences in language or cultural norms. This enhanced participation in a mixed community provides the occasion for transformation and conformation to Christ, for the members of the body are healed precisely by sharing in the communal life of the church, a life defined by the two-fold love of God and neighbor.



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Re-envisioning Womanhood through Culture and Faith

An Experience of Confucianism and Catholicism

Elizabeth Oh

Some years ago, I discovered an article in the *Toronto Star* about a family in Korea whose four girls attempted suicide. The sisters, ages 6-13, made a suicide pact and consumed rat poison together. The youngest died while the others were sent to the hospital in critical condition. The reason for the pact: to unburden their impoverished parents financially, thereby allowing their younger brother to attend school. Traditionally and historically in Korea, parents gave priority to their sons regarding education. Although times have changed, this article was published not too long ago, in 1989, and newspaper editorials in Korea at that time criticized the patriarchal social structure that often discriminated against females. As a Korean American woman who was born in the United States in the early 1980s, I should have felt quite removed from this tragic overseas incident; however, I strangely understood and sympathized with those girls. Something had tugged at my core.

Inferiority Complex of Korean American Women

Despite changing attitudes about gender and current feminist movements throughout the world, women's feelings of inferiority and being discriminated against persist. In Korean American women, these feelings are difficult to overcome, especially for the older generation of immigrant women and their daughters.

When my parents first immigrated, in the late 1970s, they carried their Confucian ideals with them and passed along a family hierarchy that placed its members in order of importance: father, son, mother, and daughter. Three generations of women lived in my household, and my grandmother and my mother taught me to serve men first during meals. The best portions of the main dishes went to my brother, as well as all his favorite foods. While they scooped rice into bowls meant for my father and brother, they explained how they had followed this tradition growing up. Although my mother was the oldest of five children, she still served her younger brothers first. My grandmother had taught my mother this, as she had done the same.

They also told me stories about women's lack of educational opportunities in the past. My maternal grandmother only received an elementary level education, and my paternal grandmother had no schooling at all. Instead, she tended to her younger brother's education as she carried him to school on her back for miles to keep him tidy from the dirt roads. Country women, like my paternal grandmother, rarely received schooling, as it was meant for men. My mother, born in the late 1940s, also had her own struggles with education. She had the opportunity to attend a private university in Seoul, but my grandmother wasn't willing to spend the extra money, especially for a daughter. Instead, my mother attended a local nursing school. As these patterns passed on through the generations, I also felt the effects of centuries-old views of women and education, even as a US-born citizen. My parents had wanted to provide for my brother by having him attend a private university while my sister and I were sent elsewhere, where tuition was cheaper. Fortunately, if it hadn't been for my brother's intervention and the help of

student loans, my sister and I would not have attended private colleges.

My older brother had very little to do with my feelings of inferiority as a female. Rather, the culture of gender bias, in which my parents were raised and which they still followed, to some extent, cultivated in me a low sense of self-worth. As a Korean American, I could not accept this gender disparity when I observed no such inequality in surrounding American families. Within my family and my parents' circle of friends, it seemed that Korean parents preferred males, as I heard them talk commiseratively of families with too many daughters. My father, for instance, wished for another son, and when I was born a girl, experienced an overwhelming amount of disappointment. Hearing about this story at an early age, I felt unworthy and unwanted. To overcome this hurt, I tried to serve and act as my parents wished to gain some appreciation and love, and this conditioned me for the rest of my life: acting obediently for people's approval.

The incident reported in the *Toronto Star* happened in Korea when I was eight years old and living in Chicago. I wondered what had gone through the sisters' minds before they created that suicide pact. Did they think their futures would be limited and that their existence would become a burden to those they loved? Did they think that sacrificing their lives would redeem them and make them more worthy?

Women have succeeded in reaching many of the goals taken for granted by their male counterparts—power, wealth, and independence. However, many women still feel unfulfilled and continue to have difficulties developing a cohesive self because of the subordinate roles imposed on women by males. When their dreams and desires are not fulfilled and are not met with understanding and empathy, women struggle with

the extremes of narcissism and low self-esteem and can become “both vain and helpless.”¹ An imbalanced identity exists, in which a woman can teeter from too much self-love to self-hate to compensate for unfulfilled desires. I, too, am still struggling with developing my own sense of self, striving to love myself and be convinced that I am worthy.

In my own family and in those of my Korean American friends, fathers were often belittling and demanding. I’ve heard my friends say how their fathers have called their moms *musikhan*, meaning “ignorant.” In extreme cases, I’ve also heard of violent and abusive fathers. Records from the Los Angeles County Attorney’s office indicate that Korean American men have the highest cases of domestic violence among Asian American men.² Korean American women who experience domestic violence feel shame and tend to blame themselves, especially since there are Korean proverbs that legitimize violence against women.³ Women and daughters who experience verbal or physical abuse from husbands and fathers can suffer from long-term psychological scars that further damage their sense of self-worth. Having grown up with a demanding father, I too often felt deficient.

Negatives Portrayals from Confucianism and Catholicism

In modern times, Confucianism has received significant criticism for perpetuating discrimination against women. Beginning in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-

¹ Angella Son, “Confucianism and the Lack of the Development of the Self among Korean American Women,” *Pastoral Psychology* 54 (2006): 330-32. doi:10.1007/s11089-006-0033-2

² Siyon Rhee, “Separation and Divorce among Korean Immigrant Families” in *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism*, ed. Young I. Song and Ailee Moon (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 157.

³ Son, “Confucianism,” 334.

1910), women were restricted to their home, did not have the right to initiate divorce, and obeyed only their father in childhood, husband in marriage, and son in old age (as reflected in “the rule of three-fold obedience”).⁴ Additionally, men could divorce their wives if they were accused of one of the “‘seven evils’: disobedience to parents-in-law, failure to bear a son, adultery, jealousy, hereditary disease, garrulousness, or larceny.”⁵ How women responded to these rules most likely varied depending on multiple factors such as social class, location, and time period. Although these traditions are now outdated, remnants such as obedience to in-laws remain challenging for many Koreans all over the world, including me.

Early literature reflecting this tradition can be found in the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In the *Analects for Women* written by female scholars, specific behaviors for a wife are detailed: “Your father-in-law and mother-in-law are heads of your husband’s family...You must care for them as your own mother and father.”⁶ My parents echoed this same sentiment by stressing that after marriage I become more part of my husband’s family than my own. Whenever I was away visiting my parents, they would insist I return home in case my in-laws would be upset by my absence, bringing shame not only to me but also to my parents. As a wife, I had specific duties to care for my husband and in-laws according to Korean culture. These entailed proper rituals of greeting and preparing gifts for different family members. I learned that I must treat my parents-in-law respectfully

⁴ Yung-Chung, Kim, ed. and trans., *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Women’s University Press, 1976), 44.

⁵ Kim, *Women of Korea*, 52-53.

⁶ William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 827.

and always say “yes” to them. When I failed to become a biological mother, I felt that I had caused shame upon my in-laws. The desire to please them carried over from my childhood to my adulthood as a wife and as a daughter-in-law.

Unsure about my identity as a woman and unable to fulfill completely the wishes of my in-laws, I turned to my Catholic faith for guidance. As a child, I felt protected and loved by Mary as my heavenly mother, but somewhere in my adulthood I lost that intimate connection with her as I forwent the prospect of motherhood in my own life. Women today—both those with and without children—have a difficult time connecting to Mary because of the distance they feel from her perfection, obedience, and purity.⁷ Since she is a mother and yet a virgin, these qualities are seemingly impossible to imitate. In addition, motherhood—in all its glory—is also stressful, frustrating, and exhausting. Still, Mary is always portrayed as serene and calm even when faced with the death of her son.

Moreover, Pope John Paul II wrote about women’s equal dignity yet complementary nature to men. His *Letter to Women* discussed the idea of the “feminine genius,” that women have innate qualities that make them selfless by nature through the act of motherhood. Women have interpreted the church’s teaching of complementarity as justifying women’s subordinate positions, calling it “benevolent sexism.” This type of sexist attitude is different from the “hostile sexism of the past, which overtly made women less than men, pointing out their spiritual weakness or propensity toward sin.”⁸ Others also have mentioned that such

⁷ Heather Grennan Gary, “Women Full of Grace,” *US Catholic* 81, no. 1 (2016): 12-17.

⁸ Heidi Schlumpf, “The Inevitable Question for Women: To Stay or Go?” *National Catholic Reporter* 52, no. 4 (2015): 22.

depictions of Mary imposed on them marginalize women to be seen as “guest workers” rather than family members. Although both Confucianism and Catholicism have negative connotations regarding women, I was still able to embrace what I found as positive and parallel aspects of the two traditions after delving into their histories.

History of Confucianism and Its Teachings

Philosophers have debated and reinterpreted Confucius’s teachings over the centuries, and Confucianism has undergone multiple revisions to suit different socio-political agendas of the times. Thus, what most people consider “Confucianism” is really Neo-Confucianism and not necessarily the teachings represented in the *Analects*. The simple yet profound wisdom of Confucius became distorted through the years; hence, there is valuable to examine his teachings more closely to clear up common misunderstandings.

Before reaching Korea, Confucianism had a long history in China. Confucius’s teachings actually predated him, for the “scholarly tradition” originated from the sage kings. Confucius (551 BCE–479 BCE) had a vision to restore ritual observances and the Way, or “the unique moral path that should be walked by any true human being, endorsed by Heaven and revealed to the early sage kings.”⁹ The fallen world had strayed far from living according to the Way, and Confucius thought his mission from heaven was to revitalize the scholarly tradition of the past to bring back harmony to an increasingly degenerating society. The cultivation of such virtues would help create a strong foundation for

⁹ Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), xii. All direct quotations from the *Analects* are translations found in this text.

social harmony, starting with the individual and consequently impacting the rest of family and society.

Confucius often taught in the form of dialogues, through which he elicited responses from his disciples in a Socratic-like manner. He valued critical thinking and regarded learning to be a lifelong process that was necessary for practicing virtue, self-realization, and self-reflection. His practical advice or “ordered sayings,” which were compiled by his followers after his death to form the *Analects*, reflect his method of teaching—allowing students to think on their own, reaching conclusions on specific situations, rather than simply applying so-called universal principles. Confucius did not create a new philosophy but intended to transmit a living tradition through his own ways of communication, personal example, and, essentially, through building relationships.¹⁰ The words to his students, “virtue is never solitary; it always has neighbors” (*Analects* 4.25), reflect the idea that virtue can only be practiced and attained in relation to others. Thus, from Confucius’s thought, three main points became central to my understanding of my identity and mission.

Self-Giving Love: At the core of Confucius’s teachings, the idea of *ren*, or “humaneness” or “goodness,” was innate in everyone and was the root of all other virtues. Anyone, regardless of social status or background, could achieve sage-hood or become a virtuous person. Generally, throughout the *Analects*, it is assumed that goodness involved considering others before oneself, serving others, and being modest and humble.

Self-Cultivation of Virtues: The best way to fully understand *ren*, however, is in the practice of the corresponding virtues *shu* (“understanding”) and *zhong*

¹⁰ Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, vii.

("loyalty"). Confucius described *shu* saying, "Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire" (*Analects* 15.3). Though the idea of *shu* sounds like the Golden Rule, Confucius also meant that people should treat others in a manner appropriate to their social status, or else fathers would treat sons similarly to how sons treat fathers. Practicing *shu* involves placing oneself in another's shoes, for example, treating a father in the way a son would want to be treated if the son were a father.¹¹ *Shu* is a Confucian virtue that is closely related to empathy and reciprocity. Along with *shu*, one must act honestly, or with *zhong*, when interacting with others. Also, the concept of *li*, or "ritual," reinforced moral principles and was an expression of *ren*. They also foster mutual understanding of how to behave in certain roles and situations. Confucius advised his students to use judgment and flexibility, as rituals are not static but must be reinterpreted and reassessed to apply to various circumstances.¹² They can be altered as long as one does not modify the meaning behind them. Rituals or proper behavior, however, must not be performed without the proper respect and attitude, as Confucius states, "Nowadays, 'filial' means simply being able to provide one's parents with nourishment. But even dogs and horses are provided with nourishment. If you are not respectful, wherein lies the difference?" (*Analects* 2.7). A person must cultivate these virtues to reach sagehood.

Self-Reflection: As Confucius believed that a virtuous person's actions were in accord with his or her thoughts, frequent introspection was necessary for self-realization and moral conduct. In all actions and duties, *ren* takes precedence over propriety, and each individual

¹¹ Paul R. Goldin, *Confucianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 16.

¹² Goldin, *Confucianism*, 22.

must reflect and act using the most humane, benevolent method of serving others.

Evidently, Confucius's actual teachings compiled in the *Analects* greatly differ from the various interpretations of his ideas throughout the centuries. Many misinterpret his teachings to promote a hierarchical structure, but Confucius often emphasized reciprocity in all kinds of relationships, such as between ruler and subject and parent and child. He stressed the responsibility of humans to practice virtue within those roles instead of forcing roles upon people to become virtuous. These words explain his idea: "Human beings can broaden the Way—it is not the Way that broadens human beings" (*Analects* 15.29).

After studying the history of Confucianism and the *Analects*, I realized that living the Way of virtue has been distorted by authority figures to satisfy their desire for power at the cost of women's freedom. Even so, Confucius's true teachings of community, daily rituals, and respect for elders have merit enough to counter present-day societal values. In today's climate, there is the danger of society veering too far into self-gratification, isolation, and the lack of reverence toward all that is sacred. Living the Way, however, is challenging unless combined with a greater purpose and mission in life. For that, I turn to the Catholic tradition to provide meaning to virtuous living.

The Role of Mary from a Catholic Perspective

In my search for identity and purpose, I needed to return to Mary, the mother of Jesus. It was her motherhood, as she became a vessel to carry out God's plan of salvation with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that allowed for the incarnation. Pope Francis

...teaches that this woman was not simply a lowly handmaid, but an intelligent and independent thinker, 'a Jewish girl who was waiting with all her heart from the redemption of her people...listening, deciding and acting... Mary goes against the tide' by entrusting herself totally to God.¹³

By returning to scripture passages that referred to Mary, I discovered parallels to the same three aspects of the Confucian *Analects*.

Self-Giving Love: Mary's simple yet profound answer to the angel Gabriel reflects her sincere gift of herself to God in her *Fiat*, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Without clearly understanding the event unfolding before her, Mary commits herself to being the "handmaid of the Lord," as someone who serves God and allows God to act through her. Because of her willingness to love and be faithful, God was able to bless her above all women. She is the mirror that reflects this glory, as Mary expresses in the *Magnificat*: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Lk 1:46-47). As someone closest to Jesus during his life, she suffered with him at the cross: "Standing by the cross of Jesus [was] his mother..." (Jn 19:25). She understood and witnessed his thirst for souls and her role in guiding them to her Son when he said to John, "Behold, your mother" (Jn 19:27). After Jesus's death, Mary stayed with the disciples and watched over them as they carried out the mission for evangelization and salvation: "All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his

¹³ Megan Fincher, "The Pope's 'Earthy' Marian Message," *National Catholic Reporter* 50, no. 4 (2013): 6a.

brothers" (Acts 1:14). Throughout her whole life, Mary grounded herself in her identity by realizing her mission and carrying it out perfectly.

Self-Cultivation of Virtues: Mary was sinless, and so, of course, perfectly virtuous. After conceiving Jesus through the Holy Spirit, she was not self-absorbed, but rather visited her cousin Elizabeth even when it was an uncomfortable journey through the hill country (Lk 1:39-40). She didn't delay but went "in haste," desiring to initiate her mission of sharing the love and joy of Jesus as quickly as possible to others. Mary's greeting to Elizabeth caused the babe to leap in her womb, and in turn allowed her cousin to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:41). Mary's visit not only brought wisdom to Elizabeth through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but furthered her own identity and mission—"blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42)—for generations to come.

In addition to presenting Christ to world, Mary also embraces her role as a mediator. At the wedding feast at Cana, she interceded for the wedding party and instructed them to listen to her Son (Jn 2:3, 5). Thus, she observes people's needs and acts on behalf of them, a virtue worth imitating as Jesus instructs, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it" (Lk 8:21).

Self-Reflection: In the manger, the shepherds revealed to Mary and Joseph about Jesus being a "savior...who is Messiah and Lord" (Lk 2:11). After they left, "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19). Therefore, from the very beginning, Mary reflected on the mysteries unfolding in her midst. Upon finding Jesus teaching in the temple, she "kept all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:51), meaning that she continually meditated on them. Mary's faithfulness expressed by her "yes" demonstrates the mission that fuels our identity. In complying to God's choice for

salvation to come from a woman, the “new Eve,” the true dignity of women is revealed.

Therefore, both Confucius’s the Way of virtue and Mary’s way of living out her calling teach us how to embrace an identity through vocation that upholds our personhood.

Navigating Two Cultures

A 2013 study examined the psychological and spiritual developments of Korean immigrant women navigating dual cultures during midlife.¹⁴ Female participants with different Christian backgrounds were interviewed. These were women who had lived in the United States for over twenty years, after being born and raised in Korea and immigrating to the US as adults. From ethnographic-style interviews, common themes emerged regarding their relationships with family and with God. Most of the women were born between 1946 and 1959 during the Korean War and the Army Revolution and therefore shared similar sentiments about their fathers’ absence and a lack of stability. Many felt unloved and distant from their fathers and formed an image of God as fearsome. Because they had lacked the experience of relating to a loving earthly father, they did not view God as loving them unconditionally. Thus, one participant “strove to prove herself and receive approval from God through behavioral commitment to church activities.”¹⁵

Another common theme among the participants was the effects of gender discrimination on their self-esteem. Some

¹⁴ Hyejeong Kim and Jenny Pak, “Journeys toward Spiritual Maturity among Korean Immigrant Women in Midlife,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 32, no. 1 (2013): 5.

¹⁵ Kim and Pak, “Journeys toward Spiritual Maturity,” 10.

were unwelcomed by their parents and grandparents, who wanted to have a son or a grandson. Accordingly, these women carried feelings of rejection, which often fueled their ambition to prove their equality to males through high academics, social achievements, and leadership roles.¹⁶

To further ease their negative self-conceptions, many of the women depended on their husbands to fulfill their emotional needs as a way of completing their identity. Upon realizing they could not define themselves through their relationships with their husbands, they turned to God and became actively involved in their Korean churches. All the participants, however, felt disappointment with their churches that operated in a hierarchical collectivist way. They were involved in all aspects of church life, but felt empty, as if nothing changed internally. When a couple of the participants moved to an American church, they developed a new understanding of God as a trustworthy and loving father. Yet as time passed, dissatisfaction with the American church also emerged due to a lack of community. Overall, as these women reflected on their spiritual journeys, they believed that

their life pains were seeds of blessings, as those pains brought about significant turning points in their lives to grow as Christians...each moment of despair and fear in their lives guided them to reduce their dependence on other people, fame, and money while searching for God's unconditional love.¹⁷

¹⁶ Kim and Pak, "Journeys toward Spiritual Maturity," 10.

¹⁷ Kim and Pak, "Journeys toward Spiritual Maturity," 15.

Learning from these women, who eventually formed a new identity as a “giver,” I could not help but feel consoled by their experiences that were so similar to my own. However, this is not without its pitfalls in life’s journey of self-acceptance, faith, and trust in God’s plan. Over several years, the women in the study experienced healing after realizing their mission to serve others and to give back to the community so that the next generations could grow and flourish. The challenges they faced in integrating to cultures in their lives

seemed to facilitate their holistic understanding of the true meaning of loving God and others in the Bible, beyond what each culture suggests separately...the virtues they gained from their collectivistic society, such as loyalty, oneness and harmony served them in their acceptance of the stresses they underwent as a new immigrant in America.¹⁸

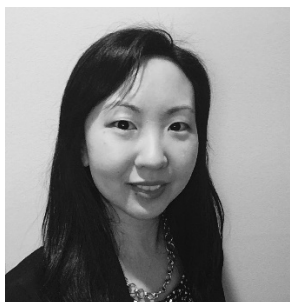
Closing Reflection

In a recent local Korean American women’s gathering, all of us shared stories of how our mothers had gifted us with a statue of Mary. One woman’s mother sent her a statue while she was in college. Some of us received them as wedding gifts or as a gift for becoming a new mother. Marian devotions are cross-cultural, but the gifting of a statue of Mary from mother to daughter is becoming a Korean American tradition. From this, we came to understand that our mothers wanted Mary to watch over us during pivotal moments of our lives when they were absent. Through this gesture, we recognized that Mary is continually present as our role model, bringing us to her Son to watch over,

¹⁸ Kim and Pak, “Journeys toward Spiritual Maturity,” 16.

protect, console, and help us become instruments of God's salvific plan.

Societal and cultural restrictions and perceptions of women may not change at the pace needed, but through the discovery of a greater purpose, women can find healing and peace. From a Confucian perspective, women are called to a virtuous life through reciprocal relationships. From a Catholic perspective, women have a special role to help grow the church through their physical and spiritual motherhood. By preserving the faith and cultural traditions of self-giving love, self-cultivation of virtues, and self-reflection through both community and individual spirituality, Korean American Catholic women can fully realize their dignified role and identity in becoming a gift to others and to the world, and, in doing so, realize this gift for themselves.



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Passover to Crossover

The Common Language of Reconciliation

Mi-Kyoung Hwang

In the first year of my doctoral studies, some of my classmates and I were invited by an older Korean couple to visit a suburban area of Chicago. The couple lived in a welcoming cozy house with a well-kept intimate garden that reflected their hospitality. After visiting with them, I began pondering their situation since they did not speak English after living more than twenty years in the United States. This initial inquiry led to a much greater investigation as I encountered a similar but more intense situation as I came into contact with the Korean American Catholic communities in the area. These parishes normally offer both Korean and English masses, and one can choose which one to attend depending on one's fluency and comfort. Often the earlier immigrants attend Korean liturgies while later generations are usually more prevalent at English masses. Most parish priests serving in these faith communities are sent from one of the dioceses in Korea by request of the local community and ordinary. Thus, the parish structure and ministries of Korean American Catholic churches often replicate those of the homeland. Visiting priests stay for a few years before returning to their diocese, while parishioners continue to live in the United States and must navigate their faith journey while interacting with American culture and society. As one can image, many issues emerge from this situation. The gap between generations is manifested particularly through linguistic challenges as miscommunication and conflict occur not only in church but also in the homes.

Immigration is a central context in understanding Korean American Catholic communities. Most Koreans immigrated to the United States for a better life by fleeing Korea to escape impoverished, oppressive, and unjust situations before the 1990s. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security reported that the number of Koreans who obtained lawful permanent resident status increased rapidly since the 1950s. The peak decade was the 1980s as 322,708 obtained legal residency.¹ This statistic offers an insight into the circumstances and reasons why Korean immigrants left their home country—widespread poverty after the Korean War, a chaotic socio-political system caused by rapid changes, and an oppressive military dictatorship. Therefore, the memory of Korean immigrants from this generation continues to remain with them as part of their Korean identity. Within this context, preserving their language has been essential in keeping their identity since being uprooted from their homeland.

Like other immigrants to the United States, this generation of Korean immigrants struggled to survive in society. They labored unceasingly to provide for their families and often had to forgo avenues of social integration such as learning the English language. By the time they could truly enjoy the fruits of their labor, their opportunities to learn had passed. Those who came as children (the 1.5 generation) played a key family role as translators for their Korean-speaking parents while experiencing the ordeals of discrimination. English

¹ The number of Koreans who obtained lawful permanent resident status in the United States was only 83 for the 1940s but increased to 4,845 for the 1950s, 27,048 for the 1960s, and 241,192 for the 1970s. Office of Immigrant Statistics of U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015 *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. See <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2015>.

deficiency for the first generation was offset by the fluency of their kin and the wider Korean community.

Since the peak immigration period of the 1980s, the 1.5 generation have now become parents and are raising their own children with a limited capacity in the Korean language. While these emerging families typically identify themselves as Americans with Korean lineage, the first generations identify themselves as Koreans living in the United States. The Korean language, which is important for non-English speakers in maintaining their identity, also continues to be an important factor within families navigating the divisions and conflicts of their co-existence within two cultures. This situation also can be typically witnessed among any other Asian immigrant community. However, this tension should not be simply categorized as a generational gap. It needs some multiple interdisciplinary perspectives to fully comprehend the dynamics within each community. Therefore, this chapter will focus on a ministerial approach by examining the language gap between different generations within a specific ethnic faith community.

Within the Christian spiritual context, reconciliation involves the Passover—stories of suffering, death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ—as the model for our own stories of crossing over as immigrants within a faith context. From this viewpoint, the faith community provides a safe and hospitable space for not only survival, but, more importantly, for reconciliation. This exploration of how Christian spirituality can provide an “undiscovered” space for reconciliation of generational challenges caused by linguistic differences focuses on semiotic approaches since true reconciliation involves a cultural resolution that involves communication.

Language as Semiotic Space

Language is “a grammatical system existing potentially in every brain, or more exactly in the brains of a group of individuals; for the language is never complete in any single individual, but exists perfectly only in the collectivity.”² This definition emphasizes two aspects of language. First, language is a *code* that consists of signs and rules by “a grammatical *system*.” Second, language “exists perfectly only in the *collectivity*.” Both indicate a collective identity. The Korean and English languages are intertwined with their own cultural systems which differ from each other, and both fully exist only in society where people freely communicate. Thus, language is intertwined with the culture of a people.

Cultural linguistics is a sub-branch of linguistics that explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations such as cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors. From this conceptual system, our worldview is built and funnels into metaphors that contain our way of thought, belief, and behavior in our daily lives. For instance, the culturally constructed Chinese medical characterization of *gallbladder* forms the basis for the abstract concept of *courage*.³ Koreans also share this gallbladder-courage metaphor in Eastern medicine; however, rather than the gallbladder, the *gut* is the metaphoric center of energy linked with power, health, and courage. A person’s gut can be translated into Korean as 장 (*jang*) or 배 (*bae*) pointing to the intestine and abdomen area of the human body. Often, Koreans connect the gut with other

² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (Chicago: Open Court, 1986), 13-14.

³ Ning Yu, “Metaphor, Body, and Culture: The Chinese Understanding of Gallbladder and Courage,” *Metaphor and Symbol* 18, no. 1 (January 2003): 13-31.

metaphors to describe a person's character. For example, *baejjang-itta* means that a person has courage, steadfastness, fortitude, boldness, or nerve and *baejjang-matta* describes a relationship where people connect in thought, mind, and energy. Courage, in its Chinese or Korean usage, reveals similarities and differences of how metaphors are derived and how culture (thought, worldview, value, attitude, and lifestyle) influences the formation of each respective language.

Cultural conceptualization of language also occurs around the globe. For example, English is a widely spoken language that has led to "the localisation of the language."⁴ This language is spoken and understood differently in the US, England, Australia, Philippines, India, and other parts of the world. In each case, the English language is localized within the unique cultural context. Therefore, some metaphoric concepts and expressions of English only exist in a specific locale and are understood only by locals.

Since language is entangled with culture, it implies a collective identity occupying space within a specific boundary, a *semiosphere*. Every act of communication contains an aspect of dialogue and creativity from semiotic experiences. In other words, semiotic space has a prior existence and is in constant interaction with people's encounters. Returning to the gut-courage metaphor, the preexistence of a semiotic space or experience is what differentiates the Korean and Chinese conceptions. Semiosphere or the semiotic space is necessary, for "language is a function, a cluster of semiotic spaces and their boundaries."⁵ New expressions emerge while others disappear, for outside of the

⁴ Farzad Sharifian, "Cultural Linguistics and World Englishes," *World Englishes* 34 (2015): 529. doi:10.1111/weng.12156

⁵ Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 123-4.

semiosphere there can be no communication, no language, and no semiosis.

The formation of language also includes identity since each person exists in relationality through communication. A basic model for communication contains many elements: an *addresser* delivers a *message* to an *addressee* in a certain *context* by the act of *contact* through a *code*.⁶ Communication illustrated by this model presumes at least two semiospheres: an addresser and addressee. Each semiosphere includes its own context and codes to express a message. When semiospheres come into contact, identity emerges through contrast of the "I" versus "the other," "us" versus "not-us." Therefore, identity emerges only in relationship and communication, and at the boundaries of these semiospheres identity exists.

The semiotic space that is recognized as "my own" is also "ours," "cultured," "safe," "harmoniously organized," and "good." In contrast, "the other" space is recognized as "theirs," "hostile," "dangerous," "chaotic," and "bad." The function of semiotic boundary is "to control, filter and adapt the external into the internal" like a membrane covering the earth.⁷ In this sense, boundaries *filter* what comes from the external into ours similar to the *translation* of a text into one's own language. The borderland between two cultural spaces is the realm of *bilingualism* or even *multilingualism*. At the periphery of one's semiosphere, the bilingual filtering is in constant dialogue with "the other" semiosphere seeking a common language.

By understanding language as a semiosphere in communication with other semiospheres, the phenomenon of the language gap between the first and

⁶ Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas Sebeok (New York: MIT Press, 1960), 353.

⁷ Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, 140.

the second generations of the Korean American Catholic community can be seen as the asymmetry of semiospheres that need to communicate with each other and seek a common language at the boundaries. The search for a common language is not an easy task and needs intervention found in the Christian wisdom of reconciliation.

Christian Reconciliation as Spirituality

Ideally, church should be a place where generations gather, creating an environment of dialogue and reconciliation. Within this context, reconciliation is *the work of God* who initiates and completes reconciliation in us through Christ; second, reconciliation is more a *spirituality* than a strategy; third, reconciliation makes of both victim and wrongdoers *a new creation*; fourth, the process of reconciliation is to be found in *the story of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ*; fifth, reconciliation will only be *fulfilled with the complete consummation of the world by God*.⁸ Robert Schreiter interweaves these five points of Christian reconciliation with conflict transformation.⁹ The first and last aspects of reconciliation reveal that God is the source initiating reconciliation as well as its completion. This teaches us to *appreciate the complexity* of situations, both in the past and the present, by allowing for multiple perspectives also necessary for generations within a specific ethnic group. The refusal to acknowledge this complexity or other approaches means that one is stuck in an old ideology – patterns of thought and behavior – instead of welcoming

⁸ Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality & Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 13-19.

⁹ Robert Schreiter, "Reconciliation as a Means to Overcoming Polarization" (paper presented at the Killeen Chair Lecture, Saint Norbert College, De Pere, WI, February 15, 2007): 15-20.

the living stranger who can transform our life patterns anew.

The second aspect of reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy, designed for *healing and transformation* of victims. Human beings as the image of God must be recognized with respect and human dignity. God begins with the victim in reconciliation, which presumes that victims hold a responsibility to collaborate in their healing and transformation by discovering how God is working in their lives. For victims to experience this healing and transformation, they need to tell what happened to them from their perspective with their own voice in addition to their own naming of the perpetrators and of the *perpetrators' confession of their stories of wrongdoing*. Both social and spiritual reconciliation are needed, and yet, for their own healing and transformation and especially for spiritual healing, the victims must be "actors" for their own healing and for the transformation of their stories. This, then, serves not only in the healing of memories but also the gradual changes of our life stories toward a new narrative. Rigid polarization occurs when actors and their stories remain stuck in a single sequence and position without any possibility for change.

The third aspect in the process of Christian reconciliation is that actors are transformed into a new creation by God. This important stage opens us up to the *mysteries of identity* that frequently occur when divisions erupt. Schreiter noted that "[a]ny change in the standoff between two parties may be seen by those parties as losing essential aspects of their self-understanding or their commitments to core values such as fidelity and truth."¹⁰ The fear of losing oneself creates an impasse in dialogue. The inability or unwillingness to develop

¹⁰ Schreiter, "Reconciliation as a Means to Overcoming Polarization," 17.

hinders the growth of our identity by burying it under the rigidity of fear, doubt, or pride.

The fourth aspect of the process of reconciliation is found in the paschal mystery by *attending to the suffering and the wounds* of Jesus. The wounds teach us something about our past, and through this encounter a new meaning emerges. "Our identities are based strongly on the stories we tell about ourselves, our families, our friends, our communities, our countries. In these collections of stories, stories about origins hold a special place."¹¹ In other words, our wound becomes a *locus* where the Passover becomes real to us. The interconnectedness of our woundedness with Christ's becomes the redemptive grace to also witness the resurrection. Through our wound as a space in which we experience suffering and death, we can also experience healing and redemption by the Passover narrative of Jesus (cf. 1 Pt 2:24).

The final aspect of reconciliation can only be completed by God through an ongoing process during our lifetime and beyond. Since reconciliation consumes the entire lifetime of each semiosphere, patience and being present are necessary. God's timing in the reconciliation process encompasses a wider outlook and offers an opportunity for reconciliation to be experienced by the present generation as well as the next. When the process of reconciliation is engaged in the first generation, their offspring become important agents for obtaining their transformative goals. However, if the wounds of the immigrant generation are not properly addressed, what transmits to the next generation causes as much violence and at times can be even more devastating because one is unaware of the stories that have caused the transmitted woundedness. Thus, the

¹¹ Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 19.

transmission of the suffering can occur consciously or unconsciously, positively or negatively from one generation to the next.

While conflict resolution focuses more on the problem that needs to be fixed, Christian reconciliation as conflict transformation pays more attention to the *participants/agents* in the midst of conflict. The spirituality of reconciliation for both participants as agents requires two practices: the contemplative prayer and the creation of spaces of safety and hospitality.¹² A contemplative attitude of listening, welcoming, and accompanying in the face of suffering and complexity is the first requirement. Next, safe and hospitable spaces where victims feel free to tell the truth for healing, justice, and forgiveness must be created.

Closing Reflection

Language as a semiotic space builds up our identity in people's narrative. Language is constructed in cultures that include historical events as well as the mindset and worldview of a group of people. The conflicts experienced by Korean American Catholic communities not only highlight a language or generational gap but also reveal trauma and confusion in identity. It is easier to distinguish Koreans from Americans in terms of setting boundaries in one's identity. However, when it is Korean American versus American, or Korean versus Korean American, boundaries are blurred and not easily recognizable. Thus, the healing of trauma and reconstruction of identity are necessary steps in the reconciliation process,

¹² Robert Schreiter, "The Spirituality of Reconciliation and Peacemaking in Mission Today," in *Mission – Violence and Reconciliation*, ed. Howard Mellor and Timothy Yates (Sheffield, UK: Cliff College Publishing, 2004), 29.

a process where Christian faith plays a significant role in creating a common space.

Christian reconciliation is a spirituality where conflict is transformed rather than a strategy seeking conflict resolution. It creates a safe and hospitable space for truth to be told. Just as language is a semiotic space, spirituality occupies a critical interior and transitional area of our lives and can replace our culturally conditioned language with the faith culture. Spiritual experience teaches the grammar of the Christian language of love, justice, peace, hope, and faith in God. Spirituality, then, is a transitional space where safety and hospitality are found. This is where we are free to play and grow from one avenue of our lives to another, learning new languages of love, justice, hope, and trust as the new realities of our reconstructed narrative.

Communication is essential for reconciliation to occur. First, communication requires us to create a blueprint and consolidate our efforts in building a church community. Second, it requires an attitude ready to face differences, an openness to listen to each other, flexibility to change perspective, and firmness in the Christian core values. Third, it requires some creativity since dialogue is not just spouting words. For this reason, it requires a mediator for a fruitful conversation, one who can facilitate constructive dialogue by letting participants hear what is necessary, pruning when it goes too far, and refreshing the air when it is too heated. The role of the mediator is like an axis as it keeps the dialogue rotating in the orbit. Rebuilding relationships is neither easy nor impossible for believers. Our God calls us, but we as individuals within a community need to be generous in responding to God in making all things new.



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A Humble but Precious Link

*Korea and Catholicism from the
Late Nineteenth Century to 1945*

Franklin Rausch

As a non-Korean scholar on Korean history married to a Filipina, I am often asked how I became interested in my field. The short version is fairly simple. I attended Indiana University to study the subject I loved, history. Needing to choose a region in which to specialize led me to investigate faraway places other than the small Indiana town that I grew up in. Through college friends, I found myself taking classes on China, Japan, and Korea. All were very interesting, but two practical and almost embarrassing reasons pushed me to study Korean history. The first was simply that university libraries had a plethora of books on China and Japan, but very few on Korea. Most of them were on the Korean War (1950-1953) and belonged in a sense to US history, as they focused on the American experience in Korea. Therefore, I saw numerous opportunities for research. The other reason was quite silly—I didn't want to learn thousands of Chinese characters and thought I would not have to if I studied Korean. Boy, was I wrong about this in two ways. First, to study Korean history and to really understand the language, a working knowledge of Chinese characters is absolutely necessary. Second, once I began studying Chinese characters, I found that I enjoyed doing so.

Discussing the relationship between my Korean studies and my Catholic faith is a bit more complex. I was raised a nominal Christian and knew very little of Christianity. Therefore, when questions arose about the

existence of God and about the goodness of humanity, I quickly lost what little faith I had. This loss of faith was not a liberation, but rather led to a deep depression with a great deal of fear and anguish. Thus, when I studied Korean history and came to learn more about the Korean martyrs, I was fascinated by their unwillingness to renounce their beliefs, even when it cost them their lives. The way the Korean martyrs lived their faith with such fidelity and devotion revealed the goodness of humanity and led me to learn more about Christianity and accept the Catholic faith as my own.

While originally inspired by the Korean martyrs, other moments in the history of Korean Catholicism also piqued my interest, particularly the Japanese colonialization of Korea, even though Catholic experience during this period was not as “glorious” as the beginnings of Christianity, even under similar experiences of oppression. From 1910 to 1945, the Catholic Church had difficult choices, often with no clear answers. Thus, rather than determining the heroes and villains from this portion of Korean Catholic history, I want to understand how people tried to make the best of a terrible situation in the hopes of gleaning important lessons for Korean American Catholics today.

The Colonization of Korea

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan radically reformed its society and established a modern government, thereby becoming one of the few Asian countries to survive the onslaught of Western colonial influence. Not only did Japan manage to maintain its independence, this island nation became an empire colonializing those around them. The Korean peninsula was annexed and became part of the Japanese empire in 1910. While many Koreans resisted, they lacked the

power to maintain their country's sovereignty against the military might of an industrialized Japan.

Since Koreans lived as a unified, independent state for more than a millennium, the colonial experience at the turn of the twentieth century was indeed a traumatic one. Initially, Korea was controlled as a military colony from 1910 to 1919. During this first period, independent newspapers were shut down by the Japanese colonial state, making it almost impossible to comment publicly on political or even social issues. Korean nationalists could easily find themselves arrested, tortured, and jailed on the flimsiest of charges against their uninvited guests. Some religious organizations were able to discuss issues in private, eventually organizing a massive but peaceful national demonstration demanding Korea's independence on March 1, 1919, on the heels of Woodrow Wilson's call for the self-determination of nations following World War I. Unfortunately, since Japan had been on the side of the victorious allies this time, such policies did not affect her colonies. In addition, Korea received no significant international support for independence and thus was unable to overcome the brutal Japanese response that killed thousands of Koreans who protested the colonial government.

Following the suppression of the March First Movement, Japanese authorities realized that Korea could no longer be ruled in so harshly. By instituting a "cultural policy," Koreans were granted more freedom to publish and speak openly about politics and society. However, censorship was not eliminated completely as those who went too far in their criticisms were still fined or jailed. In addition, the number of both colonial Japanese and Korean police increased during this period. Limited freedom worked to Japan's advantage as emerging resistance movements could now publicly

disagree with each other, further jeopardizing any collective efforts. In turn, serious divisions disrupted the independence movement as some looked for solutions based on Western democratic and capitalist ideals, while others eyed socialism or even communism.¹

In the wake of the Great Depression, the Japanese empire increased its military activities, expanding into Manchuria (1931) and then the rest of China (1937). Attacks against the British, Dutch, and Americans followed in 1941. Wartime mobilization led to harsher treatment of Koreans, particularly Japan's brazen attempts to destroy Korean culture, which left an indelible historical scar. For instance, Koreans were forced to speak Japanese even at home, participate in rituals at Shintō Shrines, and take Japanese names. As the Japanese empire expanded, many Koreans were relocated and forced to work for their oppressors throughout Asia. The introduction of the "comfort women" system forced Korean women to become military prostitutes whereby they suffered systemic abuse, rape, and sexual slavery.

Ironically, during this oppressive regime Korea underwent what scholars termed "colonial modernity" – a modernization of society that included deformed versions of the revolutions that made Western countries and Japan so powerful.² For instance, Japan was largely uninterested in introducing a similar version of the successful democratic revolution it had undertaken at home, so it could politically control Koreans as loyal subjects to the empire. Deformed modernization led to

¹ For overviews of this period, see Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea: An Episodic Narrative* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 150-94, and Michael Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 36-99.

² This issue is explored in the articles contained in Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

what appeared to be societal advances: more schools were established, and rice production was increased. However, it was the Japanese who always profited from the so-called modernization of Korea as Koreans themselves paid for most of the schools built during the colonial period, where severe governmental regulations ensured that only loyalty to Japan would be taught. In addition, limited vocational programs sought to keep Koreans in positions of servitude and prevent them from competing for professional positions that required advanced education.³ Further benefitting the Japanese was the increase in rice production as tax measures ensured that Koreans would eat less rice because they had to sell most of their harvest to pay their taxes. Not only did the peasant caloric intake decrease under the “colony modernity” economic system, many lost their land because they were unable to pay the exorbitant amount of taxes.⁴

Koreans reacted to the experience of colonialism in a variety of ways based on the amount of control exercised by the Japanese colonial state. The constant police, military, and other government presence constrained many of the protests. Those who resisted publicly faced difficult challenges. People suspected of anti-government sentiments were arbitrarily beaten, arrested, tortured, and imprisoned, a reason most open resistance by Koreans occurred *outside* the peninsula.⁵ In

³ Seong-Cheol Oh and Ki-Seok Kim, “Expansion of Elementary Schooling under Colonialism: Top Down or Bottom Up?” in *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea, 1910–1945*, ed. Hong Yung Lee, Yong-Chool Ha, and Clark W. Sorensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

⁴ Michael Seth, *A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 288–92.

⁵ For instance, open resistance such as Syngman Rhee’s diplomatic activities in the United States and Korean anti-colonial guerillas in Manchuria could only take place outside of Korea.

1912 alone, more than one hundred nationalist leaders were arrested on false charges and treated in this fashion. Even the slightest challenges to Japanese authorities were met with severe repercussions. In 1936, when Sohn Kee-chung won a gold medal in the marathon during the Berlin Olympics, the Korean newspaper *Donga Ilbo* published a picture of him with the Japanese flag on his jersey smudged out. This resulted in those responsible being jailed and the newspaper being shut down for nearly a year. Therefore, some Koreans only engaged in hidden acts of protests, acting the part of loyal subjects of the emperor by bowing during Shintō ceremonies but cursing the gods under their breath.⁶ Most eventually complied with the enforced Japanese practices; however, they still found ways to maintain some semblance of their Korean identity. For instance, when pressured to choose Japanese-style names, Koreans chose ones that utilized Chinese characters that in some ways preserved elements of their given names.⁷

Catholicism: Between Persecution and Annexation

Decades of anti-Catholic persecution during the Joseon Dynasty culminated in the killing of thousands of Catholics in a series of persecutions that began in 1866

⁶ For examples of how Koreans reacted to forced Shintō worship, see Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 111–117. It should be noted that Daniel Chi, who later became a bishop, refused to bow and was punished for that refusal. See Fr. Jim Sinnott, “Now You are Free to Speak Out,” in *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 412.

⁷ Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 117–122. For example, a family with the name of “Kim” (meaning “gold”) might choose the Japanese name “Kaneda,” which combines the characters for gold with that for a field.

and continued into the early 1870s. Those who survived first fled into the mountains before toleration allowed for a more peaceful and public establishment of the Catholic Church. Particularly significant was the treaty between Korea and France in 1886, essentially recognizing the right of Catholics—both missionaries and Koreans—to practice and spread the faith. Based on this treaty, foreign missionaries and their governments promised security and material benefits along with spiritual wellbeing. Cultural and political shifts by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century led many Koreans to look towards religion for stability and support, leading to many conversions to Catholicism.

However, some were concerned about conflicting secular issues with religious interests. Korean Catholic nationalists sought to strengthen their own positions by resisting increasingly tight control of their colonizers, while French missionaries believed in making peace with Japan for the good of the Church. Although the annexation of Korea was both immoral and illegal, French missionaries accepted world opinion by not only accepting Japanese rule but also disciplining their fold who resisted the occupation.⁸ Naturally, this led to conflict between the French missionaries and the laity.

In one such conflict, Thomas An Jung-geun (1879–1910) envisioned a Catholic educational system that included a university that would be free from Japanese influence, but his plan was rebuffed by the French Archbishop of Seoul as dangerous to the faith of Catholics. Following Japan's forced dissolution of the Korean army in 1907, An joined a pro-independence army. In the aftermath of its defeat, An assassinated Itō

⁸ Franklin Rausch, "The Bishop's Dilemma: Gustave Mutel and the Catholic Church in Korea, 1890-1910," *Journal of Korean Religions* 4, no. 1 (April 2013): 43-69.

Hirobumi (1844–1909), a high Japanese official who had played a key role in the colonialization of Korea. An's actions were quickly condemned by the Church. If it were not for a priest who disobeyed the bishop's orders not to visit An in jail, An would have been executed without receiving the sacraments. (The bishop was later found by the Vatican to have been in the wrong for forbidding such a visit, and the priest was exonerated.) Further discouragement of Korean independence also came when Catholics were instructed not to engage in the March First independence demonstrations. Seminarians who wished to do so were threatened with discipline if they participated in the demonstrations.⁹

Thus, while Catholicism grew rapidly from 1890 to 1910, it stagnated during the colonial period. There were a little less than 80,000 Catholics in Korea in 1912, served by fifteen Korean priests and over fifty foreign missionaries. In 1937, before Japan's invasion of China and the war in the Pacific caused massive population displacement, Catholics in Korea numbered less than 116,000. Although the population of Korea nearly increased by half, the Catholic Church had become stagnant and ceased effective growth. While some areas developed significantly—the number of priests rose to almost one hundred—the overall outlook for the church was not as hopeful as before. Lacking financial and human resources, the Catholic faith remained a largely rural, ghetto church, isolated from an uninterested or even hostile society. Thus, survival in such a climate was itself an accomplishment.¹⁰

⁹ Franklin Rausch, "Visions of Violence, Dreams of Peace: Religion, Race, and Nation in An Chunggün's *A Treatise on Peace in the East*," *Acta Koreana* 15, no. 2 (December 2012): 263-91.

¹⁰ Kim Jeong Hwan, "The Mutation of the Size of Korean Catholics during Bishop Mutel's Term," *Gyohoesa yeongu* 37 (2011): 5-39. (Article is in Korean.)

Catholicism and the Ambiguity of Empire

The complex difficulties and ambiguous nature of living in a colonial context reached new heights with the appointment of the first Korean bishop.¹¹ Born into a large and devout Catholic family in 1902, No Gi-nam was admitted to the seminary and eventually ordained in 1930. No first served as an assistant to Bishop Pierre-Marie Villemot at what is today Myeongdong Cathedral. He assumed many responsibilities for the aging archbishop, going on pastoral visits throughout the diocese and serving on a wide variety of committees, including ones mandated by the Japanese colonial government to mobilize human and material resources for the imperial war effort.

During this time, international criticism of Japan's invasion of China and growing animosity towards the West led to increasing pressure on missionary bishops serving in Japan to transfer authority to Japanese Catholics. The missionaries in Korea were concerned that they might have to do the same on the peninsula, even though they had been preparing for the consecration of a Korean bishop. This fear became acute following Japan's attack against the US naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Consequently, American and Irish missionaries serving in Korea were incarcerated. Bishop Villemot began secret negotiations with the Vatican to have No, who was by then quite familiar with the administrative duties associated with the Seoul Archdiocese, ordained as Korea's first native bishop. The Vatican accepted the archbishop's request, and No became the first native Korean bishop upon Villemot's retirement. He shepherded the faithful during difficult periods that included World War II, the Korean

¹¹ See Yang In-Seong, "A Study on Appointment of Fr. Roh Ki-Nam as Vicar Apostolic of Kyeongseong," *Gyohoesa yeongu* 35 (2010): 5-38. (Article is in Korean.)

War, the Rhee dictatorship, and Park Chung Hee's military coup. No is still criticized for his role in supporting the Japanese war effort, which sometimes included public prayers for its success in battle and praise for its victories. While it is beyond the scope of this article to judge Archbishop No and the decisions he made, it is important to recognize the difficult position he was in: leading a small, marginalized, and poor community as a colonial subject of an empire that was quite willing to use force to crush opposition and coerce support. For instance, following the announcement of No's installation to the episcopate, the Japanese colonial government closed the archdiocese's major seminary, and members of the Higher Police (commonly referred to as the "Thought Police") were sent to browbeat Catholic authorities for selecting a Korean rather than a Japanese bishop. Through these efforts, enough pressure was applied that a Japanese priest was selected to administer the Taegu Diocese.

Though Korean Catholics and missionaries did not always see eye-to-eye, they worked together to build churches so that they could partake regularly and openly in the sacramental life of the Church—something that often had been denied them during the period of martyrdom. They collaborated to produce, print, and disseminate written materials on such topics as Catholic doctrine to better understand and live out their faith, as well as liturgical books to foster worship together. With the help of missionaries, Western forms of art and music were incorporated into the liturgy.¹² It was during this

¹² Baek Byeong-geun, "Cheonjugyo ui gyoyuk, sahoe, munhwa hwaldong" [The Educational, Social, and Cultural Activities of the Catholic Church], in *Hanguk Cheonjugyohoesa: The History of the Catholic Church in Korea* 5 (Seoul: Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeon-guso, 2014), 440-61. This work can be found online in Korean at: <http://www.history.re.kr/>.

time that they reflected on their history, documenting eyewitness testimonies for seventy-nine martyrs who were eventually beatified in 1924.¹³

Though many communities were small and poor, Catholics were still able to establish institutions that served both their Church and the wider society. Despite burdensome government regulations, they built schools that served impoverished children and taught adults how to read and write. Responding to other social concerns, Catholics also established orphanages and associations to support the elderly and the poor. The many sacrifices of both clergy and laity allowed meager churches to do great things, even if they lacked the capacity to raise a prophetic voice against Japanese rule.

Closing Reflection: Lessons for Korean American Catholics

At the beginning of this paper, I suggested that my interest in Korean history came partly from a desire to conduct research into lesser known areas and make connections that had not been made before. After being welcomed into the community of Korean American Catholics, I found that while there is an obvious reverence towards and continued reference to the martyrs, there is perhaps somewhat of a denial and therefore a kind of deliberate abstruseness associated with this dark period of Korean history. In a time when we need modern social models that can paint a bigger picture to accompany the more microcosmic faith life that Jesus's teachings guide us towards, the lives of these Koreans under Japanese occupation can inspire and give hope to those who continue to sacrifice on behalf of their ethnic faith communities. For example, Catholics during

¹³ See Jo Hyeon-beom, "Sungyo Bokja ui Tansaeng gwa Gyohoe ui Byeonhwa" [The Birth of the Korean Martyrs and Changes in the Church], in *Hanguk Cheonjugyohoesa: The History of the Catholic Church in Korea* 5, 277-301.

the Japanese occupation of Korea had to learn to navigate the complexities of being caught in multiple worlds as they struggled to maintain their own identities while being minorities. Korean Catholics were minorities both in their society in terms of the faith as well as within Catholic circles, as foreign missionaries sought what was best for the faithful. Korean American Catholics find themselves in a comparable situation as they try to reconcile their Catholic existence as Koreans owing to their ethnic heritage while living under the jurisdiction of the US Church. Although the consequences of their actions cannot be compared, both Korean Catholics under Japanese rule and Korean American Catholics must navigate the uncertain waters of living in complex ecclesial realities. Thus, there are lessons to be learned from the past for immigrant communities if they wish to continue to maintain and transmit the faith today.



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Have You Eaten Yet? (“밥 먹었니?”)

Community through the Sharing of a Meal

Irene H. Park

The urgent need for generational reconciliation is one that I am experiencing as a recently married Korean American Catholic woman. The struggle to define myself while honoring the culture I inherited from my parents has intensified as my husband and I are now mapping out our own family. This generational tension in my home is also evident at church. As a youth minister, I find myself engaging not just the young people but the older generation to better meet their needs. Thus, I find myself in the midst of the generational divide often caused by communication issues involving language and culture. An enormous challenge in working with different generations stems from the two, almost separate, language groups—Korean- and English-speaking—in many Korean American Catholic communities.¹ Linguistic and cultural barriers between generations continue to manifest as English-speaking ministries are minimally supported along with the outright omission of young parishioners from dialogue concerning parish decisions. Exacerbating the language differences are the cultural expectations of the next generation of Korean American Catholics in appearance and behavior.

¹ Here we should note that the English or Korean title does not mean that these groups exclusively speak the respective language, but, rather, that the primary mass attended by the members of these groups is either English or Korean. In my experience, the majority of those in decision-making positions (pastoral council members, office secretary, priests, etc.) are from the Korean-speaking groups.

Being Korean, American, and Catholic are all critical components of a personal identity. This intimate connection can be a source of confusion and frustration, both personally and communally, as exemplified in some of the common experiences noted earlier. Korean American Catholics have at least three cultural components that they must navigate to define their own identity. The ratio of each aspect defines an individual, making each person unique, much like our fingerprints. Therefore, difficulties in finding communal solidarity emerge when there is a significant dissonance between the ratios. Creating a community of individuals with similar and dissimilar ratios is a great generational challenge that must be urgently addressed if Korean American Catholics are to collaborate and continue growing in their faith together. As the oldest of the English-speaking groups approaches middle age, and each generation's rendering of communal identity clashes and struggles to find agreement, it is vital to maintain unity in community.

Intimate connections between Korean, American, and Catholic cultures that form personal identity—even as a source of confusion or frustration—can also be channeled into an abundance of understanding, compassion, and confidence shared by all to find solidarity and growth. An examination of meal narratives through the Lucan perspective followed by a comparison with certain aspects of food in Korea allows for those living in the United States to understand the movement of stranger-guest-host as a roadmap for generational reconciliation.

The Road to Emmaus

When taken as one complete narrative, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles reveal Luke's master craftsmanship and gift of storytelling.

Throughout both works, several major themes emerge through a series of short stories including table fellowship. A total of ten meal stories appear throughout the Lucan gospel, and on each occasion Jesus engages a cast of characters from tax collectors to Pharisees within a meal context.² Based on these interactions, hospitality involves not simply an invitation to come and see, but includes a sharing of a meal together. Just as Jesus's life ends with the meal *par excellence*—the last supper—the resurrection begins with a similar motif on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35).

On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples encountered but did not initially recognize Jesus. Ironically, they confide in this “stranger” about Jesus who is the source of their disappointment through all that had happened in Jerusalem. Jesus then proceeds to teach them about the messianic prophecy in scripture starting with Moses; however, the two still fail to recognize him, seemingly barring him from being truly present with them as the risen Christ. Although the events on the road to Emmaus take place on the third day after the crucifixion, another approach would be to place it on the first day of the new covenant—day one of the fulfillment of Christ's salvific promise.³ In effect, when dining with Jesus, one meets salvation in an intimate way as illustrated by the Lucan account. Thus, the disciples' disbelief prior to the breaking of the bread is not only a failure to recognize the presence of Christ but of salvation itself.

The events on the way to Emmaus highlight the roles (stranger-host-guest) in the Lucan retelling of the meal narratives. The multiple roles Christ embraces is

² Eugene LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Luke* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 10.

³ LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*, 23.

significant, for in previous stories, Jesus is presented as either a host or guest at a meal but never both. After the resurrection, Jesus is presented as all three: stranger-guest-host. Initially, he starts off as a stranger, but when he accepts the invitation to stay with the two disciples, he transitions into his role as a guest. Typically, such an invitation would include a meal, and those sharing together would be considered extended family members.⁴ It is natural to assume that once Jesus accepts the invitation to stay with the two, a meal would follow. Without the meal, the pivotal moment where Christ becomes the host would never materialize. The transition from guest to host emerges from his invocation of the Last Supper as he takes the bread, blesses it, and breaks it for those gathered with him. As they finally recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread, he vanishes but continues to be present with them by expressing his salvific presence in the Eucharist. For Jesus, the table was always a public place to invite and share the good news to all humanity as illustrated by the gathering of Jewish disciples in a location outside Jerusalem (the inclusion of Gentiles). The table of the Lord represents a place of inclusion where all humanity is invited to receive God's mercy by transitioning from stranger-guest-host.

The Korean American Contribution

Homes in Korea have undergone radical transformations following Western housing patterns with the country's rapid economic growth. Prior to skyscrapers and high-rises filling Seoul's skyline, Korean homes were arranged so that each room, whether it is the kitchen or bedrooms, would open to a courtyard. Rather than creating independent spheres where contact with others is controlled and compartmentalized into

⁴ Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 87.

living spaces to maximize our benefits without the need for others, the focus of traditional Korean living arrangements maximized the communal aspect as every “exit” was an opportunity for an encounter. Following globalized patterns of development, the focal point of a home—whether in Korea or in the United States—has shifted from dining tables to televisions, computers, and gaming areas, reinforcing our spheres of independence, and compartmentalizing our lives away from each other. Since these shifts are in direct contrast to traditional Korean cultural values, ongoing reflections are necessary for proper navigation in the context of Korean American Catholic communities.

Amid all the chaos and turmoil throughout their history, Korean culture has emphasized the meal setting as central to Korean identity. With every meal, regardless of what is being served, there is a reminder that partaking in the meal is a communal event as illustrated by the *banchan*—a collection of small dishes that contain differently prepared food items for the whole table to share, and complementing the main dish (and vice versa). Through this communal focus there is collaboration and community between those who consume the meal, as well as between those who consume the meal and those who made the food, since the experience of the meal is not entirely dictated by the cook but by which foods are combined together by the consumer.⁵ The important role of the meal is found throughout Korean society, including in a commonly

⁵ Kwang Ok Kim, “Rice Cuisine and Practice in Contemporary Korean Dietary Life,” in *Re-orienting Cuisine: East Asian Foodways in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Kwang Ok Kim (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 76.

used greeting of *bap meogeotni* (밥 먹었니).⁶ This phrase can be translated “have you eaten yet?” and is as common a greeting as *annyeong*, the more formal greeting of “hello.” It is a phrase that simultaneously welcomes, greets, and shows care and affection for another. Considering the centrality of the meal in Korean culture and the departure from this shared event through the immigration experience and/or the next generation growing up in an American culture, it becomes easier to see how generations who have adapted differently may struggle to understand each other.

According the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, around half of Korean parishioners strongly felt they did not have a role in the decision-making process of their parish. Furthermore, it was reported that out of eleven groups, Koreans were the least likely to agree that their parish encouraged collaboration. Feeling unwelcome and encountering mutually exclusive cliques has been a long-standing complaint that many young adults have voiced over the years.

Returning to the Emmaus narrative provides a roadmap of generational reconciliation through invitations to share daily meals as well as eucharistic ones together where our actions of welcome (where a stranger becomes a guest) culminated in Jesus’s act of salvation (where the guest becomes the host). What emerges from being at the table together is a process of reconciliation that follows Christ’s transition from stranger-guest-host. Therefore, parallels between the Lucan experience and the Korean one is needed for Korean American Catholics to discover their true identity. Just as the Emmaus meal transformed early

⁶ Here it is written in the non-honorific in a form which an elder might use when addressing someone younger whom they have a close relationship with. This is a form that many young adults may hear when being addressed by parents or older family members.

disciples, similar gatherings transform communities of faith through the same transformative process, which builds community through reconciliation.

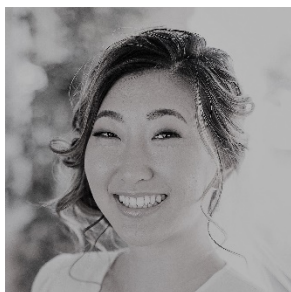
Welcome and hospitality are intimately connected with the meal in the greeting of *bap meogeotni*. In many ways, this is the Korean way of saying, “stay with us” (Lk 24:29), since the concern for another’s wellbeing was always at the forefront during impoverished moments throughout Korean history. Therefore, *bap meogeotni* requires knowledge of how “hungry” a person is as well as the context of where that hunger stems from. Coupled with this greeting, *banchan* (side dishes) that are included with every meal serve as a reminder of the purpose of our lives for Korean American Catholics. The ability to become a host gives life to others similar to the life-giving sacrificial act of Christ. *Bap meogeotni* invites others to transition from stranger to guest, while *banchan* included with every meal allows for transition from guest to host, making the meal both communal as well as eschatological.

As Korean American Catholics, the eucharistic meal is completed in the sending forth at the conclusion of mass in which we are called to go forth with the graces just received. In doing so, we follow Christ in not merely being either a guest or a host, but being both—the ultimate reconciliation with a stranger. By inviting others and showing genuine care for them, the salvific promise of Christ is also realized in our midst. At every meal, it is this essential eucharistic heart that gives this simple phrase, *bap meogeotni*, power by which we can begin to reconcile generations through the sharing of a meal together.

Closing Reflection

This essay was intended to examine meal narratives through the Lucan perspective followed by a

comparison with certain aspects of food in Korea that would allow those living in the United States to understand the movement of stranger-guest-host, presented in Luke 24:13-35, as a roadmap towards generational reconciliation. As someone who is personally involved and invested in our future as one Korean American Catholic community, I pray this roadmap will be one that we can embrace together. Through partaking of communal meals, both through the Eucharist and at meal tables, let us bring the focus of our parishes back to community and the meal. Let us not become strangers to each other, but, rather, bring each other closer as guests and hosts. Let us invite one another, regardless of culture and age, to experience the Lord's goodness through the compassionate yet simple invitation of *bap meogeotni*.



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Epilogue:

A Lost Generation of Korean American Catholics

Immigrant Issues in the Transmission of the Faith

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The following reflection sketching out a historical overview of Korean American Catholic communities is from my own experience as an immigrant from Korea in the 1970s, a parishioner growing up in an ethnic faith community as it was first being formed, a Catholic priest serving the local church as well as advising national planning for various organizations, and a professor researching and writing on this subject. Since this reflection is from my own lived experience, supporting data and documentation are limited as we are just beginning such investigations into the emergence and reality of Korean American Catholics. The hope is that collaborative efforts like this book will initiate important discussions helping us to understand the current state of Korean American Catholics while recalling a past that is beginning to fade with the initial immigrant wave of the 1970s and 1980s. Korean immigrants during these two decades were the actual founders and builders of the communities which now are well-established throughout the United States. While immigration from Korea is still active, the motivation and resources that recent immigrants arrive with are far different from those who previously made similar voyages. Those who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s were unique both for their reasons of departure and their experiences of resettlement.

Korean American Catholics¹ have done well to carve out their ecclesial presence within the US social landscape. In many ways, they have done this while being a minority of minorities both as Korean immigrants and with their Catholic faith. While being outnumbered by their Protestant counterparts nearly six to one,² Korean American Catholics have established worshipping communities across the country where Catholics of Korean descent congregate. In the decades following the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act (also known as the Hart-Celler Act), this wave of immigrants created Catholic parishes, centers, and missions.³ More recently, ongoing immigration of professional workers, international students, and transnationals (those who can go back and forth between Korea and the United States) continues to

¹ “Korean Catholics” refers to those who live and worship in Korea, while “Korean American Catholics” refers to those in the United States. Although many Korean immigrants who have lived in the US for decades would still consider themselves as Korean rather than Korean American, the Korean American Priest Association (KAPA) began using the latter terminology to distinguish the unique developments of a cultural religious group as part of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Korean American Catholics being officially recognized as part of the US ecclesial landscape in 1966 by the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

² The 2012 Pew Research Center reports 61 percent Korean American Protestants and 10 percent Korean American Catholics. See <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/7/19/asian-americans-a-mosaic-of-faiths-religious-affiliation/>.

³ Some Korean American communities have been established as parishes by local bishops being given full canonical rights as any other parish community. However, other communities have not been given similar status as they were established as either centers or missions. Although all these communities operate in a similar manner regardless of the size of their congregation, differences between such entities still exist within Canon Law.

create faith communities in areas typically unknown in previous immigration patterns.⁴

Annual accounting of the number of Catholics in a single parish is done by tallying the number of registered parishioners or by counting those in attendance at Sunday mass in a given month. In 2015, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) reported over 5.6 million Catholics or a little over 11 percent of the overall population.⁵ In most instances, the Sunday mass count is effective for budgeting and future planning both on diocesan and parochial levels. However, such reporting has not been accurate within the Korean American Catholic population for the reasons listed below. For instance, less than 100,000 Korean American Catholics were accounted for based on such reporting in 2006.⁶ Within a four-year span, that figure nearly doubled according to the 2010 US Census. Such a drastic rise in numbers is not necessarily attributed to the increase of parishioners. For decades, the Sunday mass count for this ethnic faith group has underreported Catholics of Korean descent residing in the United States. The 2010 US Census revealed the shortcomings of

⁴ For example, communities have emerged in areas such as Huntsville, Alabama, because of the development of the aerospace industries as well as other companies emerging to support this industry. These faith communities are often very small, between 50-100 parishioners. Other communities have also emerged in college towns such as in Iowa where Korean priests minister to them by visiting them once a month since they number less than 50 parishioners. In both cases, ethnic faith communities are emerging in places that were not considered destination settlements in previous immigration patterns.

⁵ CBCK, *Statistics on the Catholic Church in Korea 2015* (Seoul: Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, 2016), <http://english.cbck.or.kr/statistics/17684>.

⁶ Anselm Kyongsuk Min, "Korean American Catholic Communities," in *Religion and Spirituality of Korean America*, ed. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 21.

the Sunday mass count for this particular faith group since not all Korean American Catholics attend an ethnic faith community.

With the release of the 2010 US Census and more recent surveys, it is estimated today that Korean American Catholics total over 200,000.⁷ The discrepancy can be attributed to many factors resulting from changing immigration patterns as well as different religious behaviors of the younger generation since the previous accounting method focused solely on those present at Sunday masses in Korean-language liturgies. Since more recent immigrants have a better educational background with greater English proficiency, greater financial resources at their disposal, and employment opportunities other than being self-employed, all these factors allow them to settle in various parts of the United States that Koreans were not drawn to initially in the 1970s and 1980s. By going beyond the areas where Koreans originally settled, access to Korean-language liturgies is not readily available for some. Thus, those in areas without Korean-language masses are left to attend English liturgies to continue practicing the Catholic faith. Others who may have access to a Korean-language mass may also choose not to take advantage of this option because of preference and ease of attending a church closer to home. Thus, Sunday mass figures simply report how many people are attending mass on a given Sunday and cannot account for one's ethnicity especially within a multicultural setting, leaving this segment of the

⁷ The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) estimated the Korean American Catholic population at under 200,000 in 2010 and estimated a figure of just over 200,000 for 2013. See Mark Gray, Mary Gautier, and Thomas Gaunt, SJ, *Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States* (Washington, DC: CARA, 2014), <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/cultural-diversity-cara-report-phase-1.pdf>.

Korean American Catholic population unaccounted for within the larger population.

In addition to those unable to attend Korean-language churches on Sundays, the next generation—who have traditionally never taken an active role in making their presence felt within their parents' church—have either continued to attend the church they grew up in, attended an American church elsewhere, or simply left the church altogether. These developments make it incredibly difficult to document this population under the traditional Sunday mass counts. With the help of new census categories (for example, mixed marriages), recent surveys conducted by those outside the Korean American Catholic communities, and with more awareness of those attending non-Korean churches, greater numbers have surfaced. In fact, population data that include these segments previously unaccounted for now reveal that Korean American Catholics represent a greater percentage of the overall population than that found in Korea. Depending on which data one consults, Korean American Catholics represent more than 10 percent and up to 15 percent of the entire US population of Korean descent.

Currently, there are just over a hundred Korean parishes, centers, and missions across the United States. While these communities of worship are maintained much like their English-speaking Catholic counterparts, their existence is unique in many ways. Unlike American Catholic churches which are assigned priests by the local bishop, many Catholic churches of Korean heritage are assigned priests from Korea by their bishops overseas as part of an agreement with local US dioceses. The shortage of vocations of Korean American priests, and priests in general, has not afforded local ordinaries the luxury of assigning their own to serve in many of these communities. Therefore, unlike their Protestant

counterparts where ministers are more abundant either through immigration of Korean ministers or from the maturation of the next generation, Korean American Catholic priests are few and cannot meet all the demands of their communities. In addition, Korean American priests cannot simply choose to work with their communities or go where the needs are the greatest. Since diocesan priests are limited to serving within a specific geographical area, they must be assigned by their bishop to engage in such pastoral outreach. Further complicating the matter is the preference of Korean-speaking parishioners for priests directly from Korea. Although Korean American English-speaking priests are regarded as vital for the next generation, those more comfortable with the Korean language still prefer clergy coming from Korea for their spiritual needs. With the astronomical rise of the Catholic Church in Korea, with many vocations and resources at their disposal, those in diaspora continue to look to Korea for their spiritual sustenance.

Factors Contributing to the Cultural and Generational Disconnect

Upon my estimation, out of the approximately 105 Korean American Catholic communities across the country, approximately 75 to 80 percent of these are currently staffed by priests visiting from Korea. While there are fewer than a hundred Korean American priests ordained in the United States or incardinated into a local diocese (joining a US diocese after ordination in Korea or from a religious order), even fewer minister directly within Korean American communities. In addition, there are no clear roadmaps or models for generational ministry for US-ordained clergy who themselves struggle with their own identity. Furthermore, the shortage of clergy in some dioceses has relegated many

US-ordained Korean Americans to minister in communities benefiting other ethnic groups because of their English proficiency. In contrast, the abundance of vocations in Korea has made it possible and even advantageous for Korean dioceses to export their priests to other countries including the United States for short durations. Bishops in this country are more than willing to receive these priests to supplement the clergy shortage. The laity are also willing to receive them as they provide ministries that the local diocese cannot make readily available. Therefore, many immigrant faith communities are staffed by Korean clergy visiting for approximately three to four years and who often treat communities in diaspora as an extension of their own dioceses back home. For example, if a priest from the Archdiocese of Seoul is pastoring a church in the United States, that community is usually treated as an extension of their home diocese with parochial structures of ministry and administration resembling those back in the homeland. Rather than taking into consideration the situation of immigrants and the factors needed for growth of immigrant communities, visiting clergy do not expend enough energy in engaging English-speaking structures as well as the next generation already living in that reality, and solely minister to those who are familiar with the Korean language and culture.

Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Protestant ministers immigrated to the United States with their congregations. In addition, there are a multitude of US-born ministerial leaders who can better address the generational and culture challenges than the Korean clergy. Earlier Catholic immigrants (for example, Irish, Polish, etc.) had clergy from their homeland accompanying the immigrants and thus knew intimately the struggles of their people living in another country. Whether due to poverty or an overabundance of

vocations, other ethnic groups had their own clergy accompanying the faithful and eventually raising a new generation of ministers within the immigrant religious context. The Korean American Catholic experience is unique in that clergy did not “immigrate” with their parishioners, but rather were sent as “missionaries” – in the loosest sense – with the intent of always returning home after their temporary overseas assignment. Thus, there are currently more Korean priests in the United States than Korean American priests, an indicator that the majority of Korean American Catholic communities are pastored by visiting clergy.

Historically, Korean priests serving overseas afforded the church in Korea much needed resources as contributions from this country supported and continue to support ministries where the faith is active. This lifted not only the Korean church but the overall society as well out of the ashes of poverty that so many of the initial immigrants escaped in the 1970s and 1980s. However, some of the financial resources that were extracted from these immigrant communities to better their counterparts in Korea were never made available for the next generation. Neither have the contributions of the immigrant faith communities truly been acknowledged and appreciated by the Catholic Church in Korea since oftentimes these donations for building churches, seminaries, and other ministries were never officially documented. Korean priests visiting the United States sought donations for their causes which were not unlike many other mission appeals. However, these donations often never underwent diocesan accounting as visiting priests discreetly sent or took funds directly back home with them. Therefore, no record keeping was done on the parish or diocesan levels in the United States or back in Korea. Even after the rapid economic rise of Korea in recent decades, the mentality of the Korean

church still is to transfer valuable resources especially for missionary activities elsewhere even though these limited resources are sorely needed for the establishment of immigrant communities as well as the emergence of the next-generation church.

Resources from immigrant faith communities have been solicited through strategic campaigns as well as individual appeals. For example, when the Diocese of Incheon undertook a capital campaign to build a seminary, the financial appeal was not limited to the eastern port city of the Korean peninsula. Parishioners in the United States under the pastoral care of priests from the Incheon diocese were also asked to contribute to the campaign to build and help educate seminarians. Even with the completion of Incheon Catholic Seminary in September 1996, parishioners in Chicago were committed to alleviate the costs long after the facilities were constructed. Ironically, parishioners of places such as Chicago contributed to supporting seminarians studying to become priests in Korea but were never able to nurture vocations within their own parish community.

Today, many religious priests and sisters still connect with individuals living in the United States to appeal for financial contributions for their ministries elsewhere. Ironically again, the initial immigrants are targeted for financial contributions for ministries for overseas territories while very little support is given back for the needs of these immigrants' own children. Comments made by a Korean religious sister in Mexico exemplify the attitude the Korean church still holds regarding faith communities in the United States. Those in charge of formation of women who recently entered religious life taught their novices that since the United States was the land of opportunity, resources still needed to be collected from Korean immigrants there for poorer countries like those in Latin America. The attitudes that

drained valuable resources from US faith communities to develop communities in Korea are now being redirected to mission territories in Latin America and Africa where Korean clergy and religious serve as missionaries today.⁸

The problem with exporting resources from the United States means that communities here do not receive adequate pastoral care as scarce resources become even more so. The offspring of the immigrant generation are often forgotten in many respects while one of the main reasons for building Korean places of worship is to leave a legacy of faith and culture handed down from generation to generation.

Besides not having adequate resources for the next generation readily available at their disposal, visiting clergy and religious sisters from Korea do not attempt to learn English because they claim that the English language is too difficult. Also, they do not see the value of addressing the immigrant culture. They minister solely in Korean and often pass over the pastoral care for non-Korean speakers because of linguistic and cultural hurdles. Many Korean pastors have good intentions and desires, but these have not materialized in any intercultural or intergenerational ministry. Therefore, in addition to the linguistic and cultural hurdles, the lack of ministries continues to hinder the next generation of Korean American Catholics from making these ethnic faith communities their own.

Without many pastoral opportunities, limited resources are available for Sunday gatherings for younger parishioners. In many communities throughout

⁸ In addition to appeals by individual priests and religious sisters for their missionary activities, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) has requested that communities in the US participate in an annual mission appeal where funds collected are then distributed in mission territories (primarily in Latin American and Africa) where Korean missions have been established.

the nation, Sunday masses are celebrated mostly in Korean with only one set aside for the English-speaking community. These communal celebrations in English are often geared toward Sunday School children even though there are many older English speakers in attendance as well. The “children’s mass,” as this is commonly referred to, provides minimal pastoral care for the English-speaking community for it focuses mainly on children in grade school. The way they are celebrated also is indicative of the lack of pastoral attention beyond a specific age group.

By making children the focal point, all other English speakers find it difficult to find their place even within the English-language liturgy. It is much easier for churches to provide a children’s liturgy than to create an environment of worship for those beyond these years. Firstly, children come with their parents, so their presence is guaranteed while those who are older need to be drawn into communal worship. Models for ministry to the former are available through catechetical programs (for example, Sunday School) found in both the United States and Korea while the latter requires creative and innovative programming within uncharted waters. Secondly, no models of such intercultural celebrations exist in Korea. Although the Catholic Church in Korea has seen a dramatic increase in English-speaking Catholics from the influx of immigrants on the peninsula (for example, Filipino Catholics), masses have been celebrated separately without any intercultural exchanges. Thus, the lack of experience in bridging cultural differences in Korea itself has not afforded Korean pastors the ability to bridge the cultural and generational differences in the United States. Thirdly, children’s masses in Korea are common Sunday occurrences, and not seen as a foreign endeavor even with the linguistic differences.

Children's masses have become a part of Korean American Catholic Churches; however, priests celebrating these liturgies may not be effectively helping the next generation navigate their own social and religious needs like they are doing for their parents due to linguistic deficiencies. Because of the lack of Korean American priests, children's masses are mostly celebrated by non-Korean priests owing to their English abilities, and very rarely by the Korean pastors who occasionally will do so to stay connected with this segment of the church's population. English-speaking priests presiding at children's masses are often clergy who are retired or in other assignments and whose schedules allow them to assist these communities. Although masses are provided in a familiar language, non-Korean American priests are culturally and generationally at a disadvantage in trying to help young people who are navigating multiple worlds. Usually, an hour on Sunday for mass is the most that these ministers can provide, either due to their schedules or their unfamiliarity with the Korean American reality.

While children's masses are a good beginning in welcoming those at a young age who are not as familiar with the Korean language and culture, other pastoral opportunities are desperately needed in order to maintain the spiritual wellness of the next generation. For example, English liturgies that focus beyond the Sunday School population must be developed to foster the future of Korean American Catholics who are more comfortable speaking English but still prefer a "Korean" environment (not necessarily a growing segment, but one that is evident in many Korean American communities). However, the limited number of parishioners in this segment of the population as well as the lack of ministers makes it incredibly difficult for the

Korean-speaking congregation to commit resources for such developments.

Currently, the main ministry that young adults are invited into is to become Sunday School teachers, further emphasizing the care for the youngest church members. Out of a need for English-competent teachers and because of the lack of other ministerial opportunities, young adults are directed into ministering to children while not necessarily having their own spiritual needs met. Therefore, basic ministries focusing on young adults are needed in many communities to help this group to mature spiritually and take ownership of its faith community. Many are still seen as attending their parents' church and are not given an opportunity to develop spiritually. This "immaturity" inhibits the next generation from contributing within its own community and the wider Catholic Church.

Like other immigrant groups that came to the United States speaking a foreign language, the parent generation struggled in creating a religious space for their English-speaking children. The unfamiliarity of both culture and language either kept their children within the fold with minimal spiritual nourishment or distanced them from these religious centers of worship. The best that these parents could do because of cultural and linguistic hurdles was to instruct their children to attend mass at an English-speaking community if the Korean environment was too foreign. Without realizing their well-intentioned actions, the children of the immigrant generation were being pushed away from these newly formed communities because of the lack of resources and ministries. Ironically, a primary rationale for creating ethnic faith communities was to ensure the preservation of cultural and religious values, especially for their children. Parents who immigrated in the 1970s and 1980s often mention that they needed to build a

church so their children would have a place to call their own. The inability to create ministries for the next generation keeps Korean American Catholic communities as a place of cultural and religious respite more for ongoing immigrants than for their children.

The encouragement to go elsewhere was indirectly aided by the Catholic obligation to keep Sunday holy by mass attendance. What was lost in this “obligation” was the need for individuals to immerse themselves in a faith community. Many Korean parents excused their children’s faith development as long they kept the Sunday obligation by partaking of the Eucharist at mass. However, nothing more was encouraged for them to live out the faith, especially regarding the importance of sharing a communal life. Thus, the next generation developed a habit of going to mass on Sundays but engaging very little else regarding their faith life, especially when the Catholic faith demands much more. The greater harm done by simply encouraging the observance of Sunday mass was the failure to recognize a communal life that is central to the practice of the Catholic faith. The lack of engagement with a community and instead simply zipping in and out of mass did little to encourage the maturation of the faith for the next generation. Rather, strict, minimal observance exacerbated the disconnect with the parents’ intention to form a religious community of faith for their families.

The true nature of eucharistic practice in the Catholic faith is the realization of the body of Christ with one another to receive the body of Christ at the eucharistic table. The practices of Korean American Catholics due to worship and ministries not being readily available in existing communities encouraged only Sunday observance, creating an irreconcilable rift within the body of Christ. This disjointed approach did

not allow the faith to take root in the lived reality of the next generation. The Korean immigrant communities were foreign entities while the English-speaking communities were convenient ways of observing the faith but never allowing Korean Americans to make a faith community their own. Although this was a common experience for offspring of those who immigrated in the 1970s and 1980s (like myself), it is still unclear whether young people today will follow similar trends. Statistically, the younger generation is moving at an alarming rate into the category of “religious nones”⁹ while pastorally little has changed over the decades for the English-speaking community.

While the first factor—Korean clergy and religious sisters visiting and ministering for short periods—never fully addressed cultural and generational needs for those residing in the United States, the second factor—limited resources and the lack of English-speaking ministries—provided a rationale for not doing more in terms of pastoral care for the next generation. In addition, with ongoing immigration, the next generation became further invisible to the existing faith communities as numbers were added even amid the exodus of the next generation. Because of cultural and generational differences, it was much easier for Korean priests and sisters to focus on the initial immigrant groups of the 1970s and 1980s and later those who continued to come to the United States for educational and employment opportunities. Ongoing immigration has created a transference of these faith communities from the initial immigrant generations to the next wave of immigration rather than their children.

⁹ Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life, “‘Nones’ on the Rise” (October 9, 2012) and more recent research at the same website, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

Closing Reflection

From her inception, the Catholic Church in the United States has always been an immigrant community of faith. Originally from Ireland, Germany, Italy, and Poland on the Eastern seaboard to the Spanish encounter in the Southwestern portion of the country, immigrants have consistently filled the pews. Today, ongoing immigration from Latin America, Africa, and Asia has allowed the Catholic Church to continue her growth even when faced with challenges of retaining subsequent generations. While the US Catholic Church has grown mainly due to the efforts of this initial group, the faith has not always been transmitted to the next generation regardless of one's cultural background.

A similar religious and ethnic narrative emerged for those growing up in Korean American Catholic immigrant communities during the 1970s and 1980s. This common narrative revolves around the creation of a local community by immigrants themselves because of linguistic differences as well as marginalization in society. Thus, the socio-religious challenges encountered by initial immigrants after the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 became powerful motivators for Catholics of Korean descent to form a community of faith as their way of coping with the resettlement process. Many children growing up in this type of environment fondly or begrudgingly remember their Sundays where families traveled long distances to celebrate liturgies together in Korean. The long drives, unfamiliar language, long days at church, and lack of ministries for the next generation were common experiences shared by younger members since the immigrant church was that of their parents and not necessarily their own. Today, similar challenges of passing on the faith to the next generation still exist and are even exacerbated by the overall transformation of

Korea itself as well as how Catholic communities in the United States have developed.

A generation growing up in the Korean American Catholic Church has matured without its presence being felt today – sadly, my generation. Many of my peers who I grew up with are nowhere to be seen in these faith communities. My educated guess is that this trend will continue unless creative and innovative changes are implemented. The goal of passing on a cultural faith legacy to young people should still be the goal today for the emergence of the next generation, even though it is yet to be realized.



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Reflections from the Korean American Catholic faith experience fill the pages of this book, but are not limited to just this particular community. The reflections echo the migration patterns of previous religious groups to this country as well as transcending those who are currently navigating their own cultural and faith heritage from various parts of the world. This is why reflections from a particular ethnic faith group are not limited to them, but are also invaluable expressions of the universal aspects of our church. The desired outcome is that reflections on today's church by Korean American Catholics will encourage other Christians to do so as well to truly enrich the universal faith we profess.

Reconciling Cultures and Generations comes at a crucial moment in the history of the United States of America (USA). This book models how reflection and discourse within a racialized/minoritized community must take place if we are serious about reconciling the intersection of identity, culture, immigration, and Christian faith.

With engaging and clear prose each chapter invites those who are not "Korean, American, and Catholic" to consider questions about their own racial/ethnic identity and culture, immigration (voluntary or non-voluntary) into the USA, problems of white dominance, and faithfulness to pass on the Christian faith to the next generation. This book also holds possibility for adoption for courses in sociology of religion and theological anthropology because it models intimate discourse on Korean American Catholicism between 1.5 and 2.0 Korean Generations and it confronts the challenges of being human in a society where the dominant culture will objectify and racialize minorities. Thank you for this important book – for such as time as this.

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This interdisciplinary and scholarly anthology is a gift to leaders and scholars of inter-cultural, inter-religious, and inter-generational Christian thought and practice.

Grounded in the Roman Catholic Korean and Korean American *continuum*, these scholars name and discuss critical issues in and map a trajectory for Korean and

Korean American Christian formation. With biographical honesty and robust scholarship, the authors point to the promises, challenges, and complexities of Korean American Christian hybrid identities and their contributions to a faithful Christian witness and formation. This is a must read for anyone interested in cross-cultural and inter-generational Christian discipleship and formation.

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Since 2014 scholars have engaged in a process of theological reflection on Korean American Catholics. Through processes of dialogue and collaboration facilitated by theological pioneers, this group of scholars was not only able to begin this important work, a foundation for further reflections, but also come together to form the Korean American Catholic Theological Society (KACTS).

